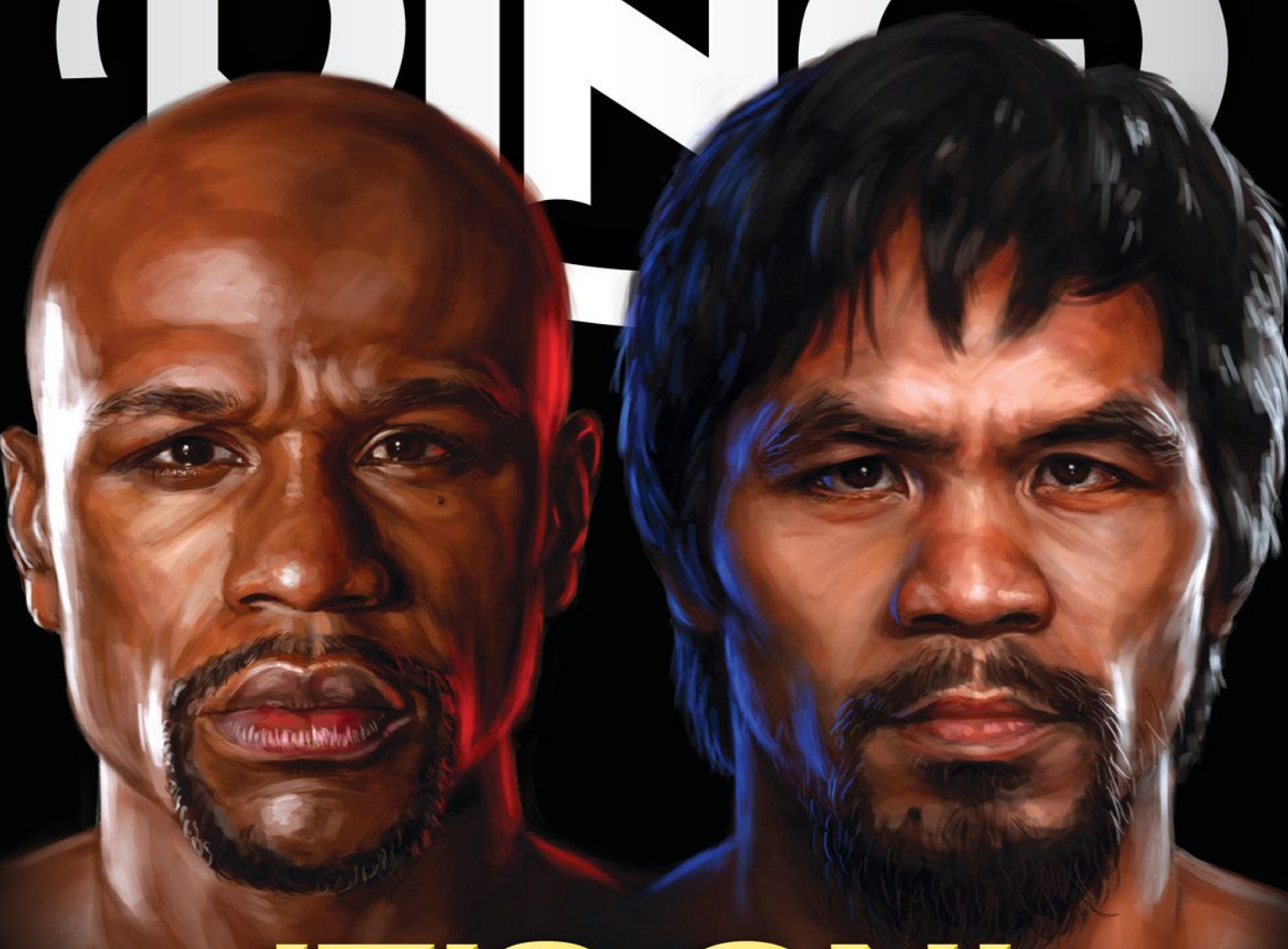
MAYWEATHER VS. PACQUIAO

THE BIBLE OF BOXING

The RING

32-PAGE PREVIEW



IT'S ON!

THE FIGHT OF THE 21ST CENTURY IS AT HAND

MAY 2015

$8.95

0 72246 00396 1 05

ALVAREZ VS. KIRKLAND
MAY 9 FIGHT IS A JUICY ENCORE TO MAY 2 P. 66

WILDER ARRIVES
NEW CHAMP'S WILD RIDE TO THE TOP P. 72

HAGLER VS. HEARNS
ENERGY LINGERS 30 YEARS LATER P. 78

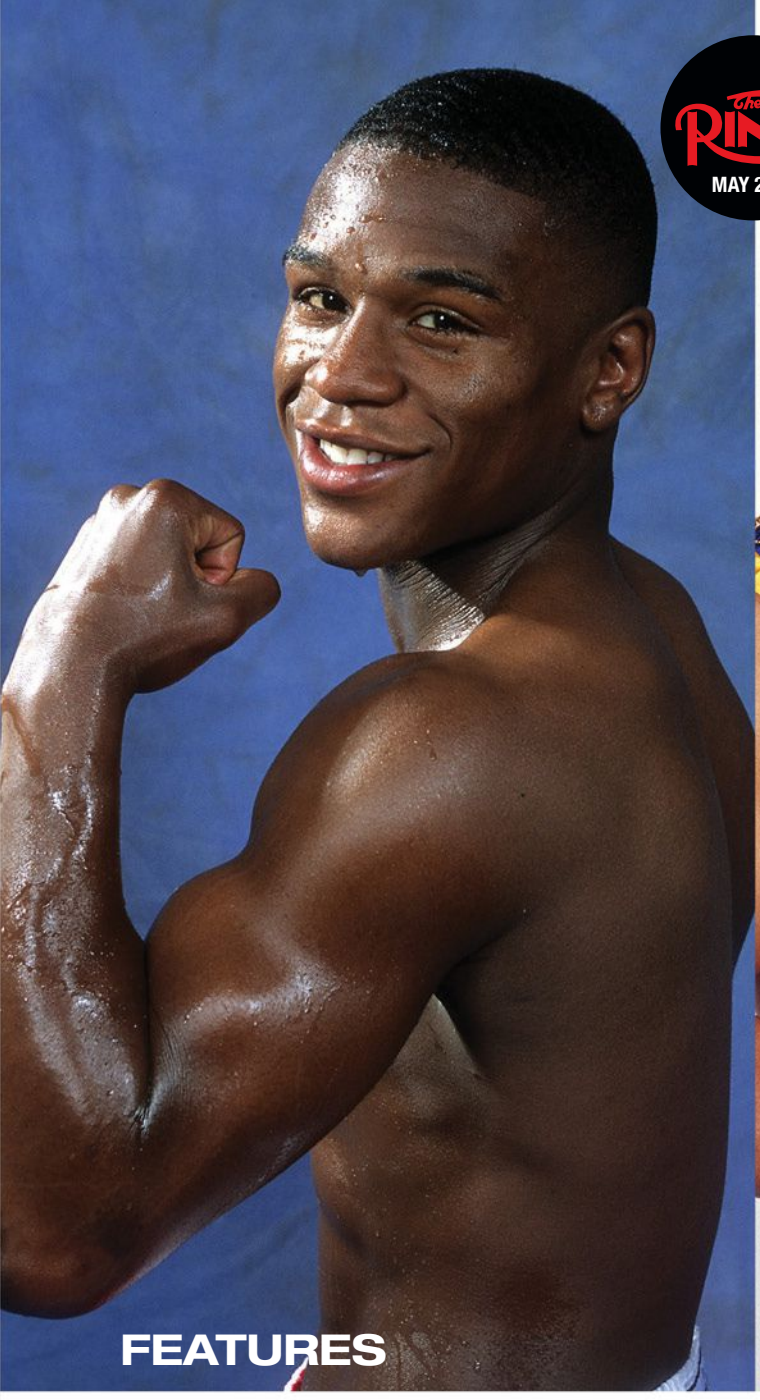
BOXING

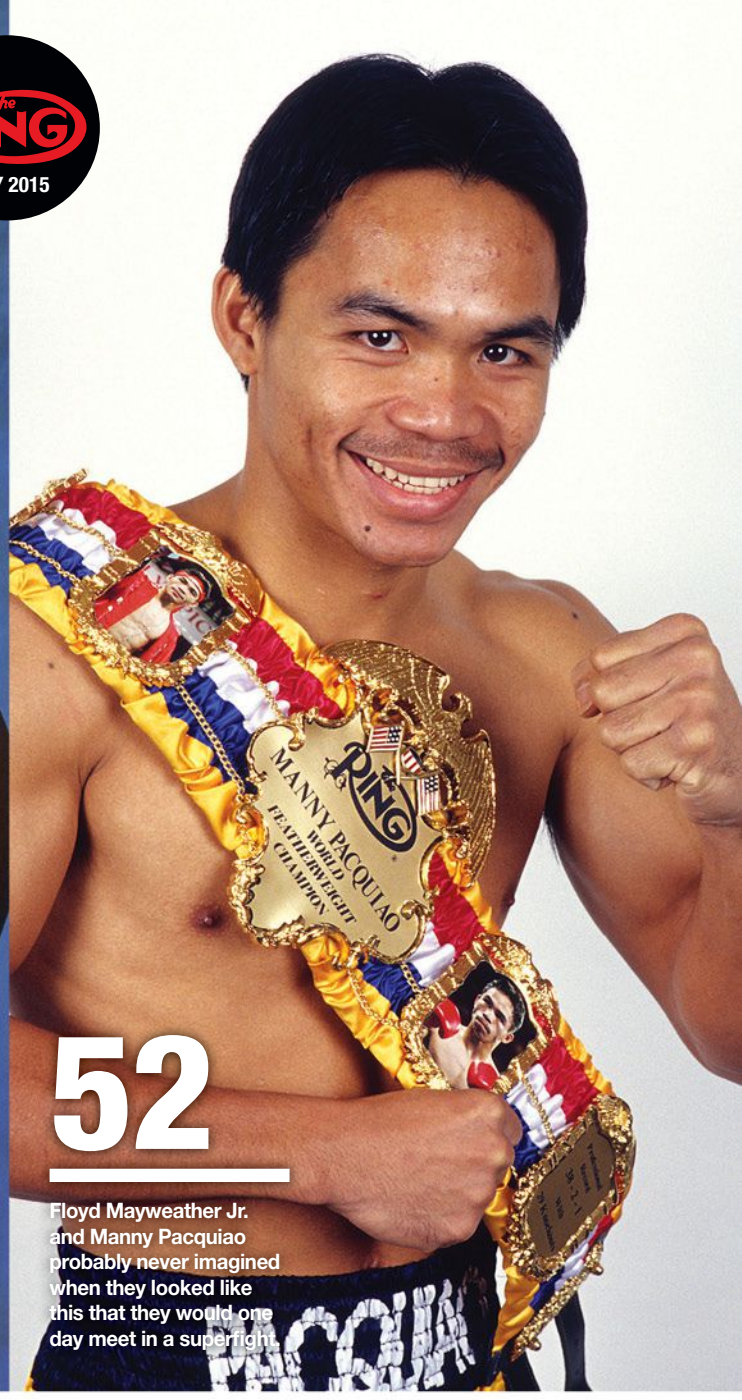
TRAIN HARD. HIT HARDER.

AVAILABLE AT WWW.ATHLETEPS.COM

aps
ATHLETE PERFORMANCE SOLUTIONS, LLC

The RING
MAY 2015





FEATURES

52

Floyd Mayweather Jr. and Manny Pacquiao probably never imagined when they looked like this that they would one day meet in a superfight.

MAYWEATHER VS. PACQUIAO *Pages 34-65*

34 AT LONG LAST
THE SPORT'S ICONIC STARS WILL FINALLY DO BATTLE
By Norm Frauenheim

40 CHA-CHING
THE MATCHUP WILL DESTROY ALL REVENUE RECORDS
By Norm Frauenheim

46 HAVE THEY SLIPPED?
TRAINERS ASSESS THE AGING BOXERS AND THE FIGHT
By Keith Idec

52 LEGACIES ON THE LINE
THE PERCEPTION OF THE PRINCIPALS COULD CHANGE
By Bernard Fernandez

58 BOOM OR BUST
MEGAFIGHTS THAT DID AND DIDN'T LIVE UP TO THE HYPE
By Don Stradley

62 HEAD TO HEAD
THE RING COMPARES THE FIGHTERS IN 20 KEY CATEGORIES
By Doug Fischer

66 ALVAREZ STEPS ASIDE
CANELO MOVES JAMES KIRKLAND BOUT TO MAY 9
By Ron Borges

72 WILDER ARRIVES
NEW HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMP'S RAPID RISE TO THE TOP
By D.C. Reeves

78 HAGLER-HEARNS
THE EPIC WAR STILL REVERBERATES 30 YEARS LATER
By Ron Borges

THE RING MAGAZINE

COVER ILLUSTRATION BY MIKE METH– MIKEMETH.NET

DEPARTMENTS

6 RINGSIDE

7 OPENING SHOT

8 COME OUT WRITING

11 ROLL WITH THE PUNCHES

14 BEST I FACED: MIKKEL KESSLER
By Anson Wainwright

16 READY TO GRUMBLE
By David Greisman

18 JABS AND STRAIGHT WRITES
By Thomas Hauser

20 OUTSIDE THE ROPES *By Brian Harty and Thomas Hauser*

23 PERFECT EXECUTION
By Bernard Hopkins

26 RING RATINGS PACKAGE

84 LETTERS FROM EUROPE
By Gareth A Davies

88 DOUGIE'S MAILBAG
By Doug Fischer

90 WOMEN'S BOXING
By Thomas Gerbasi

93 RINGSIDE REPORTS
By Norm Frauenheim

96 COMING UP

AT RINGTV.COM

NEW FACES STEVEN BUTLER IS OFF TO A FAST START
GO TO: http://bit.ly/steven-butler

EMANUEL AUGUSTUS THE UNLUCKY WARRIOR
GO TO: http://bit.ly/emanuel-augustus

DON'T FORGET TO FOLLOW US ON:

FACEBOOK.COM/RINGTV

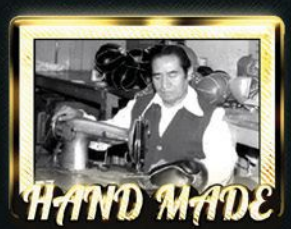
@RINGMAGAZINE

YouTube THERINGDIGITAL

INSTAGRAM.COM/RINGTV#

Los Guantes de los Campeones

store.cletoreyes.com
ANAHEIM STORE
1808 N National Street
Anaheim, CA 92801



www.cletoreyes.com
SAN DIEGO STORE
2625 Imperial Ave,
San Diego, CA 92102

/cletoreyesusa
/cletoreyesteam
/Cleto Reyes USA
cletoreyesboxingequipment

Ph. (619) 863 4557

Look for our authorized dealers

IT HAD TO HAPPEN

The May 2 fight between Floyd Mayweather Jr. and Manny Pacquiao will come five years too late but it's a damned good thing they finally came to terms.

Mayweather would never have been able to live it down had he not fought Pacquiao. Of course, he would have been seen as one of the best of his era with or without the fight or even if he loses. That is set in stone.

But had Pacquiao's name been missing from Mayweather's resume, it would've been the equivalent of an asterisk. Fans would've always said, "Yes, he was a great fighter but …." In other words, he would not have realized his full greatness.

And make no mistake: Mayweather would've been blamed more than Pacquiao had the fight not happened because of his perceived clout in the business. He has always held a stronger hand than Pacquiao.

Yes, Pacquiao's legacy also would've suffered had he not fought Mayweather. He would've been denied the opportunity to prove he was the best of his generation. At the same time, the Filipino would've emerged less damaged because he is perceived as the inferior fighter. He's expected to lose anyway.

Plus, Pacquiao has more defining fights than Mayweather. They share victories over Oscar De La Hoya, Ricky Hatton, Miguel Cotto, Juan Manuel Marquez and Shane Mosley but I believe Pacquiao's nine-fight series (6-2-1) with the Mexican Big Three of Marquez, Erik Morales and Marco Antonio Barrera sets him apart.

The sport itself might've been the biggest casualty had the fight not been made. The drawn-out Mayweather-Pacquiao negotiations became a running joke in and out of boxing. Had the fight never been made – particularly after the promise of these latest talks – fans would've been alienated like never before and non-fans would've dismissed the sport as pathetically dysfunctional.

Now, with the fight set, boxing gets its Super Bowl. It will command the attention of the sporting world like no other fight perhaps since Sugar Ray Leonard fought Thomas Hearns in 1981 – 34 years ago.

For one night, boxing will be the most important sport in the world.

And that wouldn't be the case if the fight were truly happening too late in the careers of Mayweather and Pacquiao. It should've happened in 2010, when Pacquiao was at the peak of his popularity and powers and Mayweather had returned from a 21-month layoff. The fact it didn't is lamentable.

But they remain arguably the Nos. 1 and 2 fighters in the world. That cannot be overemphasized. No. 1 vs. No. 2, the very best vs. the very best. How often does that happen?

It's why the fight still matters strictly in terms of boxing. And when you factor in five years of hopes and hype, it's why we all should be thrilled that Mayweather and Pacquiao will finally meet in the ring.

The RING

VOLUME 94, NO. 4 | MAY 2015

FOUNDER
Nathaniel Fleischer
(1888-1972)

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Michael Rosenthal

MANAGING EDITOR
Brian Harty

ASSOCIATE EDITOR
Douglass Fischer

ART DIRECTOR
Lamar Clark

CONTROLLER
Deborah L. Harrison

CIRCULATION DIRECTOR
Kenneth J. Gudaitis

ADVERTISING INQUIRIES
Robert Gasparri
213-233-2952
sepub@sepublications.com

SUBSCRIPTION INQUIRIES
BACK ISSUES INQUIRIES
DIGITAL ORDERS INQUIRIES
Sports and Entertainment Publications
P.O. BOX 433122
Palm Coast, Fl 32164-3122
800-846-6438
thering@emailcustomerservice.com

SEND EDITORIAL COMMENTS TO:
comeoutwriting@sepublications.com
or P.O. BOX 251753,
Los Angeles CA, 90025

THE RING (ISSN: 0035-5410), Vol. 94, NO. 4 (May 2015), is published nine times per year (no issues in June, October and February) by Sports and Entertainment Publications, LLC, P.O. Box 90254 Brooklyn, NY 11209. Periodicals postage paid at Brooklyn, NY 11209 and additional post offices. Postmasters: Send change of address notices to: THE RING, P.O. Box 433122, Palm Coast, FL 32164-3122. Single copy price $8.95 in U.S.A. and Canada (£4.95 in the U.K.). Subscription price U.S. And possession $49.00 for nine issues; Canada and Mexico add $7 for nine issues per year and all remaining countries add $15.00 for nine issues per year. Not responsible for the loss or non-return of unsolicited articles or photographs, which will not be returned unless accompanied by a self-addressed envelope bearing the proper amount of postage. The entire contents of this magazine are copyright ©2015 Sports and Entertainment Publications, LLC. No part of this magazine may be reproduced without the written permission of the publisher. All rights reserved. Publisher is not responsible for the accuracy of the content of advertisements appearing in this magazine, nor the delivery or quality of merchandise or services offered. No endorsement of any such advertisement is intended or implied. Advertisers and agencies assume liability for claims arising from the content of their advertisements. FOR ADVERTISING INQUIRES AND RATES: (213) 233-2952. U.S. / Canadian and International distribution by Kable Distribution Services Inc., 14 Wall Street, Suite 4C, New York, NY 10022. UK distribution by Comag Tavistock Rd., West Drayton, Middlesex UB77QE, England. Printed in U.S.A

MIKE COPPOLA/GETTY IMAGES

OPENING SHOT

Not even an oversized glove could save actor J.B. Smoove in this scenario. He and Wladimir Klitschko were at a party at Madison Square Garden in New York.

COME OUT WRITING

MAYWEATHER VS. PACQUIAO

Manny Pacquiao has always surprised us when his back is against the ropes. In 2001, he was a two-weeks' notice replacement for Lehlo Ledwaba. He TKO'd him. He romped on Marco Antonio Barrera in front of a Mexican crowd. He pummeled Oscar De La Hoya into his retirement when everyone thought he was too small. He took on the big guys, notably Miguel Cotto and Antonio Margarito. I wouldn't be surprised if Pacquiao pulls the biggest surprise come May 2 and that is to put the "1" in Floyd Mayweather's "L" column.

Wayne Castillo
Manila, Philippines

Of course, Pacquiao is a great fighter. He will leave everything in the ring. And if his style proves to be wrong for Mayweather, he might win. But Mayweather has a unique ability to adjust to his opponents' styles and his 5-inch advantage in reach will make it difficult for Pacquiao to get inside his guard the way Marcos Maidana sometimes did. Mayweather should be the favorite.

William Ellis
Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

I somewhat secretly don't want it to happen as I feel this fight will be the biggest anticlimax to ever grace a pugilistic ring. There is nothing these guys can do that will match the five- to six-year build-up. And, what's more, the woodwork (general public) boxing fans will be so disappointed that boxing's stock will only plummet further.

Greg Kearney
Keighley, England

The Chris Algieri fight showed us that Manny does not know how to cut the ring off. The Juan Manuel Marquez trilogy has shown us how he can be timed, out-punched, out-boxed and ultimately knocked out. Mayweather will cruise to a unanimous decision.

Hugo Adame
Los Angeles

I have Pacquiao winning this fight. I think that the combination of the work rate of a Jose Luis Castillo, the awkward angles of a Maidana and the speed and power plus southpaw stance of a Zab Judah (all guys Mayweather had trouble with) is the perfect recipe to defeat Mayweather. I think that Mayweather will look good early and maybe even drop Pacquiao at some point but once Mayweather gets dinged a few times, he will go into a shell and not put out enough meaningful offense to sway the judges.

John Sylvester
Seattle

I believe Floyd will eke out a decision victory over Manny due to his defensive wizardry and ring generalship. However, I truly believe this is the first fight in four to five years that Manny is actually pumped up for and hope we see the PacMan of 2009 vintage!

Raji Samra
Calgary, Alberta, Canada

Pacquiao's only chance is to throw caution to the wind and throw 1,000-plus punches. He threw 669 punches for a 34 percent connect rate against Algieri. Pacquiao won't have the openings to throw as many punches against Mayweather and he won't connect at as high a rate as he did against Algieri. I'm rooting that Pacquiao proves me wrong but my head says Mayweather gets a clear unanimous decision.

Josh Harding
Shell Rock, Iowa

Observers focus so much on Pacquiao's five losses but I believe his imperfect pugilistic record is part of the reason he is so great today. Defeat is a part of life that causes the weak to crumble and the strong to grow. Some fighters are flattened by it (Ricky Hatton) while others learn from it and can eventually flourish as a result of it. Pacquiao is part of the latter group. His ability to make a spectacular comeback after such a crushing defeat to Marquez and his ability to humbly accept it, learn from it and evolve from it, are the reasons I believe he is a stronger fighter than Mayweather, a man whose entire claim to greatness revolves around his prized, cherished, flaunted and worshipped "0."

Roberto Guerra
Hollywood, Fla.

I don't care if it's five years too late because as a hardcore boxing fan I have been playing this fight over and over in my head. Finally, I can stop the back and forth and on May 2, 2015, I will have the answer I've wanted to know since Nov. 14, 2009.

Oscar Palacios
Kitchener, Ontario, Canada

The most recent edition of "Best of Dougie's Mailbag" (April 2015) was Doug Fischer's best work so far. He did an outstanding job breaking down Pacquiao's rise in weight classes. I think he hit the nail on the head as far as Paulie Malignaggi's "reckless" assertions go and shot down anybody else's PED suspicions of Pacquiao. Mr. Fischer has once again displayed outstanding and responsible journalism with his research. I really hope Malignaggi reads this editon of "Dougie's Mailbag." He could learn a thing or two.

Victor Rivero
Pacifica, Calif.

WRITE TO THE RING! **Come Out Writing, The Ring, P.O. Box 251753, Los Angeles, CA 90025 comeoutwriting@sepublications.com** ★ Emailed letters will include a writer's email address unless a city and state of origin is provided. Letters may be edited for reasons of space and clarity.

DOWNLOAD The RING APP

AND PREVIEW THE DIGITAL EDITION FOR FREE!

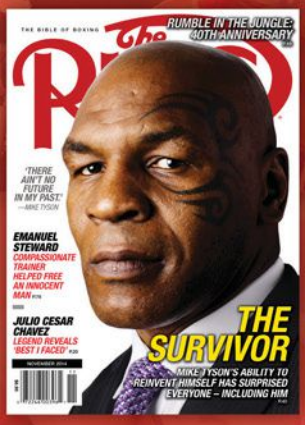
Available on the App Store

GET IT ON Google play

amazon.com

SUBSCRIBE TODAY »

SUBSCRIBE TODAY AND SAVE !



Please Check Off The One You Wish To Order:

Save Over 35% Off Newsstand Price!

☐ Six Issues of The Ring for $33.70* 6500TR

Save Over 50% Off Newsstand Price!

☐ One Year of The Ring for $49.00* 6500TR

Plus The Ring Digital Edition for Free (A $24.00 value)!

SUPER SAVER—Over 60% Off Newsstand!

☐ Two Years of The Ring for $75.00* 6500TR

Plus The Ring Digital Edition for Free (A $45.00 VALUE)!

DIGITAL SUBSCRIPTION—Over 70% Off Newsstand!

☐ One Year of The Ring Digital Edition for $24.00 6500DG

MAIL TO: Sports & Entertainment Publications LLC
P.O. Box 433122, Palm Coast, FL 32164-3122

TELEPHONE: 1-800-846-6438

E-MAIL: thering@emailcustomerservice.com

Please indicate method of payment:

☐ Check or money order (enclosed and payable to Sports & Entertainment Publications LLC)
☐ VISA ☐ MasterCard ☐ AMERICAN EXPRESS

Card #__ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __ __

Expiration Date: ___/___ (MO/YR) __ __ __ (3-DIGIT SECURITY CODE)

Signature:_____

NAME_____

ADDRESS_____APT.____

CITY_____STATE_____ZIP_____

E-MAIL_____
(necessary for digital subscription)

TELEPHONE_____

*FOR CANADA AND MEXICO: $52.50 FOR 6 ISSUES; $56.00 FOR ONE YEAR; $90.00 FOR TWO YEARS. ALL OTHER COUNTRIES: $81 FOR 6 ISSUES; $84.00 FOR ONE YEAR; $105.00 FOR TWO YEARS. INTERNATIONAL MONEY ORDERS ONLY IN U.S. FUNDS ONLY. AIRMAIL SHIPPING ONLY OUTSIDE THE U.S. PLEASE ALLOW UP TO EIGHT WEEKS BEFORE YOU RECEIVE YOUR FIRST MAGAZINE. OFFER EXPIRES DECEMBER 31, 2015

TO ORDER ONLINE, OR GO TO:
WWW.RINGTV.CRAVEONLINE.COM/SUBSCRIBE

TO RENEW SUBSCRIPTION, GO TO:
HTTPS://SSL.PALMCOASTD.COM/28501/APPS/LOGINSSO

ADVANCED DEGREES

Degrees of separation between fighters of the past and their more contemporary counterparts. This month, regular Advanced Degrees contributor Gregg Morgan managed to connect first-ever WBC strawweight titleholder **Hiroki Ioka**, who won his belt in 1987, with new WBC heavyweight champ **Deontay Wilder** in only six steps.

HIROKI IOKA
FOUGHT

JOHN MEDINA,
WHO FOUGHT

MANNY PACQUIAO,
WHO FOUGHT

ANTONIO MARGARITO,
WHO FOUGHT

BUCK SMITH,
WHO FOUGHT

DAMON REED,
WHO FOUGHT

DEONTAY WILDER

STEVE MARCUS/GETTY IMAGES

10 A MONTHLY BOXING LIST

This month: Floyd Mayweather Jr. and Manny Pacquiao have owned boxing the past decade, as our annual Best Fighter Poll indicates. Either Mayweather or Pacquiao have finished No. 1 in each of the last 10 years. We poll 10 boxing experts and determine a winner using a point system similar to college sports polls. Here are our winners:

Manny Pacquiao won THE RING's Best Fighter Poll three consecutive times.

2014: MAYWEATHER

2013: MAYWEATHER

2012: MAYWEATHER

2011: MAYWEATHER

2010: PACQUIAO

2009: PACQUIAO

2008: PACQUIAO

2007: MAYWEATHER

2006: MAYWEATHER

2005: MAYWEATHER

FIGHTERS' FAVORITES

WHAT BOXERS ARE INTO OUTSIDE THE SPORT

1 TYSON FURY HEAVYWEIGHT CONTENDER ★ **2 JAMES DEGALE** SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHT CONTENDER ★ **3 BILLY JOE SAUNDERS** MIDDLEWEIGHT CONTENDER

FIGHTER	MUSIC	CAR	FOOD:	TATTOOS	ATHLETE OUTSIDE BOXING	MOVIE	VIDEO GAME
1.	"Elvis (Presley) and The Arctic Monkeys."	**"Rolls Royce Shadow 1."**	"Indian cuisine."	"None."	"Rory McIlroy."	"The Notebook."	"None."
2.	"I listen to everything: hip-hop, R&B, a bit of indie, all kinds."	"To be honest I drive my dream car. From the age of 10 I've always loved Range Rover Sports and I'm lucky enough to drive it now. If money wasn't an option, probably a Ferrari."	"I'm a big foodie. I love any food but probably Italian or West Indian."	"No tattoos."	"David Beckham."	"That's a hard one but I like **'Taken.'"**	"I don't play computer games."
3.	"I like R&B."	"I drive a Mercedes. My dream car is a Bentley; I'm getting one in March."	"Indian."	"No tattoos."	"It's got to be **Usain Bolt,** the Olympic runner."	"My favorite movie is 'Inside Man.'"	"My favorite video game would probably be FIFA."

— **Anson Wainwright**

CHAVEZ: JEFF BOTTARI/GETTY IMAGES; SAUNDERS: JULIAN FINNEY/GETTY IMAGES; DEGALE: CHARLIE CROWHURST/GETTY IMAGES; MAYWEATHER: JOHN GURZINSKI/AFP/GETTY IMAGES; PACQUIAO: NOEL CELIS/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

GOOD, BAD, WORSE

By **Michael Rosenthal**

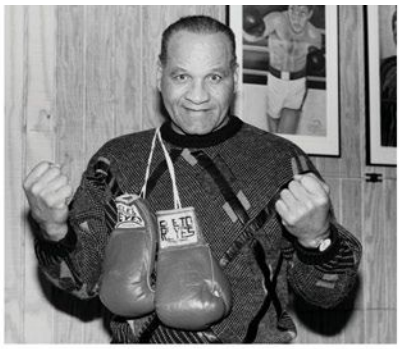
THE BEST AND WORST IN BOXING FROM THE PAST MONTH

GOOD

The recent news involving Julio Cesar Chavez Sr. centered on the unveiling of a statue of the great Mexican champion in his hometown of Culiacan. The greatest fighter his country has produced deserved the tribute. Less publicized was the opening of a rehabilitation clinic there, Chavez's second. The three-division titleholder has struggled mightily and publicly with substance abuse – both drugs and alcohol – during and after his Hall of Fame career. I ran into him more than once when he wasn't quite sober. Now it seems that he's winning the battle against his demons, which is tremendously gratifying for those who have admired him. And the fact he has opened the rehab centers serves at least two purposes: It helps others in a similar position, proving that he really is the people's champion, and it serves as a motivating factor in his ongoing efforts to stay clean. Let's hope he has many happy years ahead of him.

BAD

Nothing would've rivaled the damage to boxing had the Floyd Mayweather Jr.-Manny Pacquiao fight not been made. The fact Canelo Alvarez-Miguel Cotto didn't come together hurt, though. That also would've been a huge fight and probably a lot more entertaining than Mayweather-Pacquiao. The Mexican vs. Puerto Rican angle – combined with the fighters' popularity and recent success – would've made it one of the most compelling installments in what might be the sport's greatest nation vs. nation rivalry. Alas, Cotto passed on the fight because he wasn't satisfied with the proposed deal and/or hoped he could get a second (and very lucrative) crack at Mayweather. That's understandable. He is nearing the end of his career and wants the biggest paydays possible. However, the fans missed out on a great fight. Not all is lost, though. Cotto's trainer, Freddie Roach, has said he still likes Alvarez as an opponent for his fighter. Perhaps a second round of negotiations will result in an agreement. And boxing fans are left with a terrific consolation prize: Alvarez vs. James Kirkland on May 9, which has fun written all over it.



WORSE

One sad element to the aging process of boxers – even some great ones – is that they're largely forgotten late in life. An example is light heavyweight champ Harold Johnson, who died at 86 on Feb. 19. Johnson isn't on anyone's all-time Top 10 list but he was an exceptional fighter for most of two decades. For instance, in 1953, he outpointed the great Ezzard Charles nine months before Charles gave Rocky Marciano absolute hell in their first fight. That gives you an idea of what the Philadelphian could do. The feeling here is that a guy like Johnson – a complete, disciplined, technically outstanding pro – would've dominated the 175 division today but maybe I'm romanticizing the old days more than I should. It's safe to say that he would've been a force in any era. And, of course, he isn't completely forgotten. He received the ultimate recognition in 1993, when he was inducted into the International Boxing Hall of Fame. And now, upon his death, we have the opportunity to acknowledge his remarkable success in the ring. I just hope he knew that those of us in boxing appreciated what he did.

RING POLL

A MONTHLY POLL OF OUR RINGTV.COM READERS

The superfight is set so we asked: **What will be the result of the Floyd Mayweather Jr.-Manny Pacquiao fight on May 2? Here is how you responded.**

THE PERCENTAGES:

Pacquiao by KO	40.02
Mayweather by decision	29.29 »
Pacquiao by decision	24.98
Mayweather by KO	3.41
Draw	2.30

Note: 6,220 readers voted

Mikkel Kessler announced his retirement in early February.

MIKKEL KESSLER

Mikkel Kessler lost his motivation. And that's the time to get out of boxing.

The four-time super middleweight titleholder announced his retirement in early February, ending an outstanding career that began in 1998 and included fights against the best 168-pounders in the world.

Kessler said last summer that he intended to continue his career but decided to walk away because he couldn't secure a big fight.

"I have thought long and hard over my options … but none of these options are enough to get me motivated," he said in a statement. "I need big events to make me train to get me to the standard that I have been used to presenting my fans with.

"I said I would like nothing more than to avenge my loss against Andre Ward and also have a decider against Carl Froch. These are fights that motivate me. But for one reason or another they do not want to fight me. I am always in training, it is part of my life, but I consider myself in a state of retirement."

"The Viking Warrior" fought arguably the three best super middleweights of his era – Joe Calzaghe, Andre Ward and Carl Froch – in their home countries. He was never afraid to travel.

INSET: SCOTT HEAVEY/GETTY IMAGES; JOHN GICHIGI/GETTY IMAGES

Kessler won his first title by forcing then-WBA 168-pound beltholder Manny Siaca to retire at the end of the seventh round in 2004. He was upgraded to WBA super champion after adding the WBC title with a third-round knockout of Markus Beyer in 2006.

In the fall of 2007, Kessler traveled to Wales to meet fellow unbeaten Joe Calzaghe, the RING and WBO titleholder. Both fighters had their moments in the first half of the fight before Calzaghe made adjustments and pulled away on the scorecards to win a unanimous decision.

Kessler rebounded to win the WBA title but lost it to rising star Andre Ward by a technical decision in the opening round of Showtime's Super Six World Boxing Classic in 2009.

The Great Dane would rebound again in the second round, taking Carl Froch's WBC championship by a decision in 2010. Kessler vacated the title after sitting out the rest of the tournament with an eye injury and would never again win a major belt.

Kessler was asked to reveal his most satisfying victories.

"I think the first time I had to defend my WBA belt," Kessler told THE RING. "I was 25 years old, going to Australia, going to fight this guy Anthony Mundine. I wasn't in shape, my back was hurting and I only did 20 rounds of sparring for that fight. I went 12 rounds. It was a big fight and I won every round.

"You have Froch when I came back. I had lost to Ward, everybody said I was finished and I gave Froch his first defeat. That was a great fight."

Kessler fought 12 world champions and never lost a fight in Denmark. He leaves the sport with a record of 46-3 (35 knockouts).

Away from boxing, Kessler's girlfriend had a baby boy just over a year ago. He is building his own house. He also has invested in other real estate and said he is considering other projects.

Kessler graciously agreed to discuss the best fighters he fought in 10 key categories.

BEST SKILLS

Joe Calzaghe: I think Calzaghe had a lot of skills. Froch had different skills. He's slow but he's strong and has long arms and he's mentally strong. Ward was also very good. It's difficult to just point out one. I had (Librado) Andrade for 12 rounds, he came [at you] all the time; you couldn't keep him away. It was like a nightmare. I think when you get to the top we all have different skills but if I had to pick I would say Joe Calzaghe had the best skills.

BEST JAB

Anthony Mundine: I would say in my last fight it was Froch, he had a good jab. Joe Calzaghe had a good jab. But Anthony Mundine had the best jab. He was smart with how he used it.

BEST DEFENSE

Andre Ward: Ward had a defense where he threw one punch and he holds you. That's his defense. That's the best I've seen. But it ruins the fight. I would say Librado Andrade; he could slip the punches, I'd never seen anything like that before.

BEST CHIN

Librado Andrade: He had the best chin. I hit him so much … but he could take a punch. Of course, Froch, he can take a pretty good punch.

BEST PUNCHER

Carl Froch: Ward, he didn't really hit hard. Froch hit hard. Joe didn't hit hard. If I had to choose someone, I choose Froch. He is a hard puncher when he hits you with a punch but he's slow.

FASTEST HANDS

Calzaghe: Either Joe or Ward. There were too many years between fighting them but I would probably say Joe.

FASTEST FEET

Ward: Good question. I think Ward had the fastest feet. He kept out of the way and made full use of the ring.

SMARTEST

Calzaghe: I would say Ward was clever. He stuck to his plan. So did Joe. [Calzaghe] was afraid of me. I remember that. But he got hit and he changed his plans against me [in the middle of the fight].

STRONGEST

Andrade: He came [at me] for 12 rounds. I never fought anyone like that. Even Froch is strong and he's a strong finisher but Andrade … I'll never forget that fight. I had to keep him away all the time. Very strong.

BEST OVERALL

Calzaghe: He's gonna read it, that son of a bitch! (Laughs.) I would say the best fighter and mentality, the build-up, the nice guy, is Joe. He inspired me. I came strong, I was young, I hadn't lost a fight. Overall I would say he wasn't the best puncher. He's fast and he punched with the inside of his gloves but he was good at it.

By **David Greisman**

Mike Alvarado evidently gave himself no chance to beat Brandon Rios.

ALVARADO LET HIMSELF DOWN

THE FORMER TITLEHOLDER'S LACK OF PREPARATION AGAINST RIOS WAS APPALLING

The shame wasn't that Mike Alvarado quit after three rounds of being a punching bag against Brandon Rios. The shame was that Alvarado quit on himself before he ever stepped in the ring that night in January.

For a warrior who made his name in battle after battle, Alvarado was woefully weak-willed in the months and even the weeks leading up to the bout. And he put forward as pitiful a performance as possible on fight night.

Alvarado didn't owe us a war. He could've gone out and tried to mix boxing and brawling, the strategy he employed to win a close decision over Rios in their 2013 rematch. He never stood a chance, however. His only significant offense was effectively offending any of his remaining backers and believers.

Sure, he robbed boxing fans of another classic along the lines of the first two Rios fights. But the real insult was how little he cared, how little chance he gave himself to be competitive on an evening when his career most needed the opposite.

Given his many past run-ins with the law and the time he'd spent behind bars, he should've known

better than to get in trouble again and he absolutely shouldn't have been so stupid that he subsequently skipped out on his court dates. Yet that's what he did, leading to his arrest last fall just when Top Rank was working on making Alvarado-Rios III a reality.

And then, even after the fight was announced, he dumbly did it again. He was a passenger in his own vehicle, riding with expired registration long past midnight. There was a gun in the car, illegal because Alvarado is a felon. He claims it was the driver's and that he hadn't known about it beforehand. That doesn't matter because he had once again failed to appear in court in December for the same cases that had made him a wanted man months before.

He looked bad in his mugshot. He sounded horrible in interviews. He looked terrible in the ring, and not just like a fighter who had been in hard for wins over Breidis Prescott and Mauricio Herrera, in the defeat to and victory over Rios, in his title loss to Ruslan Provodnikov and subsequent dissection at the hands of Juan Manuel Marquez. No, he also looked like a man who was living hard while not working hard enough, whose only run was the 4 a.m. drink run that brought about his arrest.

That makes three straight losses, including two in front of his hometown Colorado crowd. The Provodnikov loss was disappointing but at least saw Alvarado wilt against the relentless Russian's pressure. There was no such effort against Rios and not anywhere near enough effort in training camp.

Fans could be heard booing during Alvarado's post-fight interview. They're unlikely to be seen in notable numbers again. It's fitting that it was a long, arduous ascent for Alvarado to become a star in this Rocky Mountain State, only for everything to rapidly go downhill from there.

★

Golden Boy Promotions used to be the New York Yankees of boxing. Now it has one superstar, a handful of role-playing veterans and a massive number of minor-league prospects who Oscar De La Hoya hopes will turn into major-league talents.

Golden Boy needs to do what the Yankees rarely had to: rebuild like a mid-market team that has been emptied of most of its big names. That's because many of the top attractions in boxing were either never actually under contract with Golden Boy or had their deals expire. Now they are gone, taken away by their shared adviser, the powerful Al Haymon.

For a time, while De La Hoya struggled with addiction and personal demons, he was an absentee owner who left Golden Boy in the hands of chief executive Richard Schaefer. Haymon and Schaefer had a relationship through which Golden Boy ran the shows on which Haymon's boxers fought. When De La Hoya returned and sought to assert control, Schaefer departed.

Haymon's grand plans presumably were already in the works for his "Premiere Boxing Champions" series. But with Schaefer out at Golden Boy, Haymon has now enlisted other promoters so as to skirt federal regulations regarding managers not simultaneously serving as promoters for the same fighters. He's taken a significant swath of star power and a massive number of television dates with him.

"Premiere Boxing Champions" will be televised on CBS, NBC and a number of American cable channels. But those who thought Showtime would be left out of Haymon's plans were too quick to write that network's eulogy.

Indeed, Showtime invested money in fights involving Haymon's boxers in 2014 in the hopes they would lead to bigger matchups on that network only to watch them land elsewhere. However, it's clear that Showtime and Haymon will be doing business going forward: Showtime's next two cards were scheduled to feature Haymon fighters – Jhonny Gonzalez vs. Gary Russell Jr., Jermell Charlo vs. Vanes Martirosyan and Julio Cesar Chavez Jr. vs. Andrzej Fonfara.

Yes, it's NBC that's getting Danny Garcia vs. Lamont Peterson despite that infamous August card of mismatches Showtime paid for, with Garcia blowing away Rod Salka, Peterson dominating Edgar Santana and Danny Jacobs taking out Jarrod Fletcher. It's clearer now that Haymon was delaying Garcia-Peterson for when his big business venture launched.

It is Haymon who is in control, who has an estimated 170 fighters in his stable and who now oversees the Evil Empire of boxing, able to replenish his ranks at any time, given the considerable sway he has in the sport. And he potentially wields power over other promoters as well, given the various titleholders, contenders, prospects and even lower-level fighters he has. There will be fewer options available for other promoters when so many names are thanking Haymon.

While Haymon has been portrayed as a shadowy boogeyman, this could end up being good for boxing if he grows the size of its audience. His money is involved. Unlike the days of Andre Berto raking in millions for mismatches, Haymon now has a vested interest in giving the fans quality.

Showtime must hope that fans getting fights on free broadcast networks or basic-cable packages will still fork over money to subscribe.

And Golden Boy will need to work wisely and get lucky, playing Moneyball and scratching out hits while Haymon plays hardball and swings for the fences. RING

By **Thomas Hauser**

‘I’M GOING DOWN’

FIGHTERS EXPLAIN WHAT IT’S LIKE TO HIT THE CANVAS

Bernard Hopkins stopped Oscar De La Hoya with a single body shot.

When Bernard Hopkins was dropped by Sergey Kovalev in the first round of their Nov. 8 title-unification bout in Atlantic City, it marked the third fight in which Hopkins visited the canvas.

Knockdowns in boxing vary widely in cause and effect. Some knockdowns result from glancing blows that land when a fighter is off balance. At the other end of the spectrum, sometimes a fighter gets whacked.

A fighter can be knocked down and suffer no adverse consequences other than embarrassment and the loss of a point. Or he can be hurt badly enough that he’s unable to think clearly and fully control his motor skills.

Hopkins has experienced both ends of the spectrum. Jean Pascal knocked him down twice in their first encounter. In each instance, it was a flash knockdown. But there was a time when “Father Time” found himself in more dire circumstances.

“I remember it like it was yesterday,” Hopkins said. “I was fighting Segundo Mercado in Equador (on Dec. 17, 1994). Fifth round, I didn’t see the punch. He’s punching and I’m punching and he got there first. I don’t remember falling at all. That’s how hard I got hit. I remember being on the canvas and asking, ‘How did I get down here?’ I got up. He knocked me down again in the seventh round, and the judges scored the fight a draw. Four months later, we fought again and I knocked him out.”

Larry Holmes is remembered for rising from the canvas after being knocked woozy by Earnie Shavers and Renaldo Snipes and, in each instance, coming back to KO his opponent.

Holmes’ philosophy with regard to being knocked down is simple: “First you get up. Then you worry about whether or not you’re all right.”

Some of boxing’s other well-known practitioners have their own memories of being knocked down.

JED JACOBSOHN/GETTY IMAGES

ROY JONES JR.: "The big thing is, a knockdown is a loss of control. And a fighter never wants to lose control. The first time I got knocked down in the pros, it was against Louie Del Valle (on July 18, 1998). I don't remember going down. It was like I blacked out for a second and then, 'Son of a bitch knocked me down. Now I'm pissed.' I got up and won every round in the fight except that round. And there were a couple of fights that you know about where I got knocked down that were worse. That was the same sort of blackout, only longer. There's also the sort of knockdown that happened in my last fight in Poland (against Pawel Glazewski on June 30, 2012), which was a balance thing. I said to myself, 'Oh, s--t; I'm going down. I got to get up fast so they don't think I'm hurt.'"

MARK BRELAND: "It was against Marlon Starling (on Aug. 22, 1987). I don't remember the punch. I was on the ropes and he hit me. As I was going down, I said to myself, 'Oh, s--t.' Then I hit the ground with a thud. The feeling was almost like being relaxed. It was an awkward feeling. I was telling myself to get up but I couldn't. I thought I was getting up but I was more struggling than anything else. And then it was over."

KEVIN KELLEY: "The first time I got knocked down was by Gregorio Vargas the night I won the featherweight title (on Dec. 4, 1993). It was like there was a flash and a pop. One moment, I was standing up. The next moment, I was on the ground. I didn't even know I was falling. In 36 fights, it had never happened before. But the thing is, after it happens once it plants a seed in your head and it can happen more easily because you're more comfortable with the idea of getting knocked down. I probably should have gone to counseling or therapy for it. Because after that, when I got hit and hurt, something in me would choose to go down rather than get hit again. Fighters think weird things. Thirty-six professional fights, no knockdowns. And after that, I got knocked down all the time."

MICKY WARD: "I had pretty good balance so there were no flash knockdowns. Each time I went down, I was buzzed. I got knocked down four or five times. Sometimes, it was like a light went dark for a second in my head and I was down. Sometimes, I was aware that my equilibrium was screwed up and I was stumbling. Each time, my first reaction was to ask, 'How did I get here?' But you know how you got there. You got hit hard in the head."

RANDY NEUMANN: "I went down a couple of times from flash knockdowns. You go down; you get back up. It's not a big thing. The first time I was really hurt was by a guy named Jimmy Harris (on Feb. 18, 1971). He didn't know how to fight. I was playing with him and got careless. Then I found out that he could punch. A fighter isn't a good witness when he's knocked down like that because he doesn't remember everything. And if you saw what was happening as it unfolded, you wouldn't have gotten knocked down to begin with. For me, it was like the electricity was shut off in my brain. I got up before 10 and I knew where I was. But I was out on my feet and the referee stopped it."

ZAB JUDAH: "Knockdowns are about timing. Knowing how to get to the other guy faster and better than he gets to you. The first person to knock me down in the amateurs or pros was Jan Bergman (on Feb. 12, 2000). It was my first world title fight. I knocked him down twice in the first round. Second round, he hit me with a hook up top. I'd never been knocked down before so I didn't realize what was happening. Then it was, 'Oh, no! I'm down.' It was a flash knockdown. I wasn't hurt. I was more embarrassed than anything else. I'm like, 'Damn! I can't change what happened now.' So I got up and did what I had to do to win the fight."

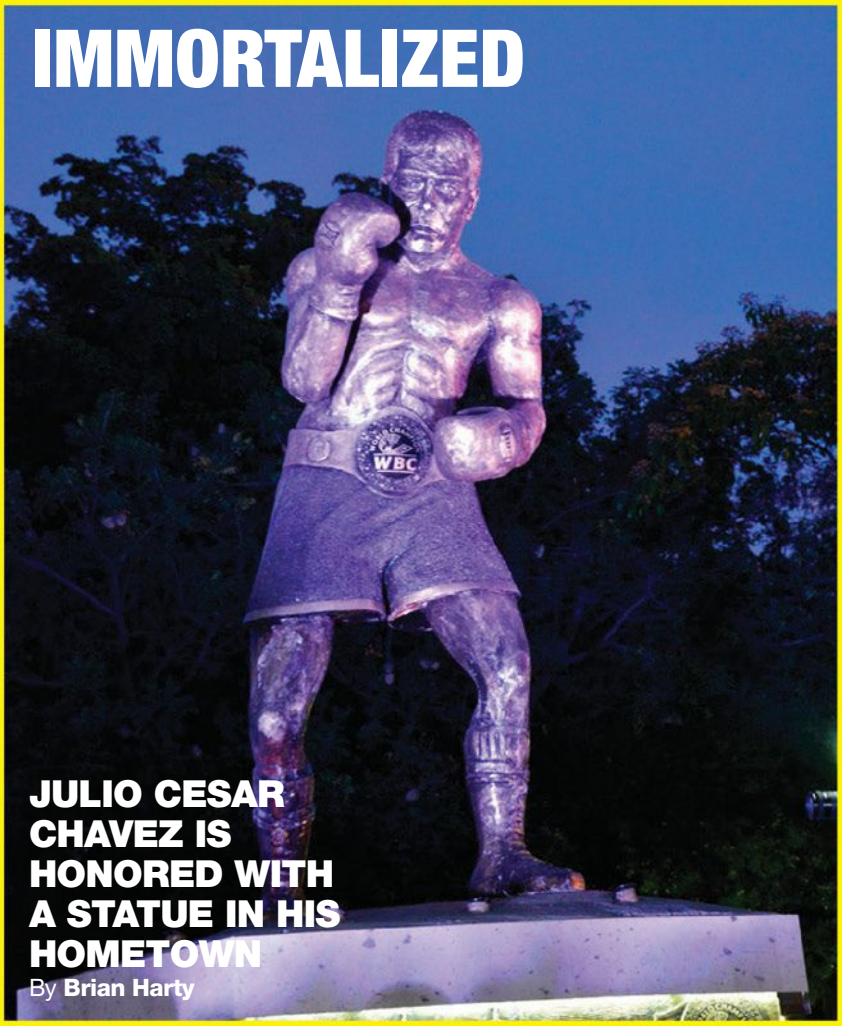
And then there's the Golden Boy, Oscar De La Hoya, who shared a remarkably candid recollection with this writer.

OSCAR DE LA HOYA: "I got knocked down four times in the pros. The first time was by Narciso Valenzuela (on Oct. 30, 1993). He hit me square on the chin but it was more a question of my being off-balance. I got up and knocked him out a minute later. The second time was pretty much the same thing against Giorgio Campanella (on May 27, 1994). And Ike Quartey knocked me down with a left hook that was a good punch but also just a flash knockdown (on Feb. 13, 1999). I had good whiskers. Those knockdowns were more embarrassing to me than anything else. Each time, I said to myself, 'This shouldn't be happening to me. I'm a superior fighter.'

"The other time I got knocked down was by Bernard Hopkins. That's interesting because we're talking about the whole psychological aspect of where I was in my life at that time. The fight was competitive. I was in the fight. But it was a very unhappy time in my life. I was tired of being who I was. He hit me with a good body shot. I went down. I've asked myself a thousand times since then, 'Could I have gotten up?' And the answer is 'yes.' But I wanted everything to be over. Not the fight; being the Golden Boy, everything. It wasn't something I consciously thought out when the referee was counting. But those conflicts inside me caused me to stay me down. You have to go really deep into the root to understand." RING

Thomas Hauser can be reached by email at thauser@rcn.com. His most recent book ("Thomas Hauser on Boxing") was published by the University of Arkansas Press.

IMMORTALIZED



JULIO CESAR CHAVEZ IS HONORED WITH A STATUE IN HIS HOMETOWN

By **Brian Harty**

The Julio Cesar Chavez statue is 12-feet high and made of bronze.

Right up there with attending one's own funeral, attending the public unveiling of one's own 12-foot bronze likeness must be a moment of supreme existential weirdness. In the latter case it must also be supremely gratifying (the former, too, depending on the eulogies).

In early February, **Julio Cesar Chavez** was present for the dedication of such a monument in his hometown of Culiacan, Mexico. The event was attended by scads of Mexican boxing luminaries as well as thousands of devotees.

Ignoring any critique of the statue itself, or that the greatest amount of detail seems to have been reserved for the WBC belt around its waist, it's an honor well deserved by a boxer whose hero status is both unassailable and unparalleled in Mexico. It's hardly necessary to refer to him as a Hall of Famer and the accomplishments of the three-weight world champion are well known to the readers of these pages.

Showing no hard feelings about the belt thing, WBA President Gilberto Mendoza summed it up: "Chavez is one of the best of all time, not only in Mexico but for the world."

The Los Angeles Times unveiled a more cringe-worthy portrait on Feb. 21 when it printed side-by-side photos of **Floyd Mayweather Jr.** and **Manny Pacquiao** in a story the morning after their fight was announced. The problem was that it was a photo of **Tim Bradley**, not Mayweather. We won't say mistakes are never made here or that the hours following the announcement weren't crazy, but ... ouch.

Two retirements to note: former junior lightweight contender **Rocky Juarez** and four-time super middleweight titleholder **Mikkel Kessler**. An installment of "Best I Faced" featuring Kessler is on Page 14.

A Georgia PSA discouraging road rage featured a driver presumably sh---ing himself when the person he's raging at turns out to be **Evander Holyfield**.

Three men in their 20s were found guilty and will serve a minimum of 30 years in prison for the murder of **Corrie Sanders** in South Africa. The former heavyweight titleholder was shot in the stomach when he moved to protect his daughter during an armed robbery in 2012.

Dewey Bozella, who was found guilty of murder and imprisoned for 26 years before being exonerated in 2009, settled his wrongful-conviction lawsuit against Duchess County, New York, for a reported $7.5 million. After his release, Bozella famously fought a cruiserweight bout on the undercard of Bernard Hopkins vs. Chad Dawson I in 2011 to fulfill his thwarted dream of being a professional boxer.

Here's a twist on the stories usually linking boxers to brain scans. **Jill Matthews**, the first woman to win a Golden Gloves championship and a pro until 1999, discovered she had a brain tumor. She found out only because of dizziness that her doctor initially dismissed as symptoms of menopause. Once she mentioned she had been a boxer, the doctor immediately ordered an MRI and found the tumor – which has now been in remission for five years.

THE RISE AND FALL

CEDRIC KUSHNER WAS AN IMPORTANT PROMOTER … FOR A TIME

By **Thomas Hauser**

SANDRA MU/GETTY IMAGES

Cedric Kushner (right, with David Tua) promoted 50 shows a year at his peak.

Cedric Kushner was a strange man.

He had no active family ties. Love seemed beyond his reach. He spoke openly, even proudly, of his involvement with prostitutes. His greatest pleasure derived from being in boxing and spending time with boxing people.

"Boxing," he once said, "is a business in which I sue you on Tuesday and buy you lunch on Wednesday. I like that."

Kushner was born in South Africa in 1948. A self-described "disobedient youngster who had no interest in school," he abandoned academia after failing the American equivalent of seventh grade and worked at a series of jobs, including a stint as a tally clerk on the docks of Cape Town. He left South Africa in 1970 as a deckhand on board a freighter and came to the United States.

Kushner worked as a laborer in a Boston warehouse; in Florida, cleaning swimming pools and handing out towels at the Fontainebleau Hotel; and as a Ferris wheel operator at an amusement park in New Jersey. In 1974, he formed Cedric Kushner Promotions with the aim of promoting rock concerts. Eight years later, he began promoting fights.

There was a time when Kushner promoted 50 shows a year, many of them in Europe. He was a tireless worker with a good eye for talent. His "Heavyweight Explosion" franchise developed marketable fighters. For one glorious moment, he was on top of the world.

On April 22, 2001, Hasim Rahman knocked out Lennox Lewis to claim the heavyweight throne. At the same time, Shane Mosley was ranked No. 2 on most pound-for-pound lists. Kushner promoted both men.

Then came the fall.

Don King lured Rahman away with a duffel bag filled with cash. Mosley fulfilled his contractual obligations and left Kushner for greener pastures.

Meanwhile, Kushner was overreaching. A series of unprofitable fight cards at the Hammerstein Ballroom in New York City incurred hundreds of thousands of dollars in losses. An ill-advised venture called "ThunderBox" led to an even greater cash drain.

And Kushner's health was failing. For much of his life, he'd abused his body, becoming morbidly obese. After undergoing a gastric bypass operation in 2003, he failed to follow the required vitamin regimen, which led to more health problems.

In the final years of his life, Kushner suffered from acute physical issues and the onset of dementia. He died on Jan. 29 after suffering a massive heart attack at age 66.

Kushner had a variety of nicknames over the years. But the one that stuck among his friends was "Uncle Ced."

I understood that sentiment. When I began writing about boxing on a regular basis, I was regarded as a fringe Internet writer. As such, I was accustomed to slights. Often, I found myself in conversation with a promoter or other insider who was looking over my shoulder for someone better to talk with.

That never happened with Cedric. In those early days, he treated me the same way he treated everyone else in boxing. With respect. I was grateful for that.

Cedric Kushner wanted to be liked. He was. RING

Thomas Hauser can be reached by email at thauser@rcn.com. His most recent book ("Thomas Hauser on Boxing: Another Year Inside the Sweet Science") was published by the University of Arkansas Press.

A BLUE-COLLAR CHAMPION

HAROLD JOHNSON EARNED RESPECT WITH HIS CLASS AND ALL-AROUND ABILITY

By **Lee Groves**

Harold Johnson (left) went 1-4 against Archie Moore.

Some fighters seize the public's imagination with awe-inspiring one-punch knockouts. Others bedazzle with bursts of supersonic speed. A few grab headlines with their retina-burning attire, inspirational life stories or inflammatory trash talk.

Onetime light heavyweight champion Harold Johnson, who died the morning of Feb. 19 at 86, didn't take any shortcuts to earn his greatness. He was a solid citizen in a sport saturated by crazies, criminals and characters. He was the guy who clocked in every day and did his job in such a classy, dignified manner that one couldn't help but admire his excellence. Johnson was a beautifully proportioned 5-foot-11 specimen who used a picture-perfect stance, a textbook high guard, compactly crisp punches and uncommon patience. He struck only when the openings presented themselves and not a moment sooner. That's how confident he was within his technical envelope.

Had Johnson been a basketball player he would've been like Tim Duncan, whose command of details is such that he is nicknamed "The Big Fundamental." Had he been a pitcher, he would've plied his trade like Greg Maddux, who won 355 games with superb control and exquisite craft yet struck out 3,371 batters without the benefit of overwhelming speed. They, like Johnson, won as much with their brain as they did with their athleticism and that enviable combination allowed them to enjoy long and distinguished careers.

While Duncan is in his 18th NBA season and Maddux played for 22 years, Johnson's boxing career lasted a quarter century. From 1946 to 1971 Johnson went 76-11 (32 knockouts) and beat the likes of Ezzard Charles, Archie Moore, Arturo Godoy, Jimmy Bivins, Bob Satterfield (twice), Nino Valdes, Marty Marshall, Von Clay, Eddie Machen, Eddie Cotton, Doug Jones, Gustav Scholz and Henry Hank. His highly technical and unrushed approach was deemed boring by some but to the cognoscenti, such as the late Hall of Fame matchmaker Teddy Brenner, he was "perfection."

Johnson may be best remembered for his five-fight series with Moore, in which he won only once – a 10-round decision in their third fight, the middle bout of a back-to-back-to-back gauntlet between September 1951 and January 1952. Their final meeting, in August 1954, the only one involving a championship, was their most exciting. Johnson, in his first title fight, broke open a close contest with a knockdown in the 10th. Leading on two scorecards and even on the third, Johnson appeared on his way to immortality but the "Old Mongoose" rallied to score a 14th-round TKO.

After the old National Boxing Association stripped Moore, Johnson won the vacant belt in February 1961 by stopping Jesse Bowdry and notched a defense against Cotton before out-pointing Jones to gain undisputed recognition. After beating Scholz on points in Germany, Johnson lost a heartbreaking split decision to Willie Pastrano. Johnson fought on for another decade, going 7-2 before retiring at 42.

Johnson was inducted into the International Boxing Hall of Fame in 1993 and his class included Hagler, Elorde, Zivic and Giardello. His surname may have been ordinary in comparison to his peers but his game was anything but. RING

Lee Groves is a boxing writer and historian based in Friendly, W.Va. He is the author of "Tales From the Vault: A Celebration of 100 Boxing Closet Classics." To order, please visit Amazon.com or e-mail the author at l.groves@frontier.com to arrange for autographed copies.

HITTING THE HEAVY BAG

'THE IMPORTANCE OF HITTING THE HEAVY BAG IS FOR BUILDING YOUR POWER'

Good boxing demands good technique. A missed step here, an off-balance shot there, and you could be looking up from the canvas. The sport is as much about foot positioning as it is punching power. It's a ballet of fists and feet, of the whole body functioning as one. To achieve that, one must master the fundamentals.

Perhaps no one today has a better understanding of the basics than future Hall of Famer Bernard Hopkins, which is why he plays the leading role in "Perfect Execution."

Each month in THE RING Magazine, Hopkins demonstrates a particular skill and explains how to execute it. Photographs help you understand the moves. Our website, RingTV.com, also features an accompanying video that allows you to watch and listen as Hopkins imparts his wisdom.

THE MONTH: HITTING THE HEAVY BAG.

"The importance of hitting the heavy bag is for building your power. It's not for speed, like you'll see with the speed bag and what you'll do with pad work. Hitting the heavy bag is an essential part of any training program. The heavy bag doesn't hit back and you have a chance to really sit down on your punches. Any young fighter wants to use the heavy bag as a way to sharpen your technique in finding out how you can dig into the body and do basically everything from A to Z."

ED MULHOLLAND

ESSENTIALS OF HITTING THE HEAVY BAG

Stage 1. You notice I don't have anyone holding the bag when I hit it A. The bag is about setting up power punches. And notice how the bag is swinging; it will swing back at you if you can't find the proper rhythm B. I'm always aware of where I am with the heavy bag and that it doesn't swing back and hit me. I'm hitting the bag like I would an opponent. And like facing someone live, I don't want that opponent to come close to me. When you're fighting someone, they won't stand there and let you hit them. It's why you shouldn't let anyone hold the heavy bag when you're hitting it. An opponent moves, the heavy bag moves. You have to be conscious in the gym like you're working with a live opponent. Imagine when you're hitting the heavy bag that it's a live opponent.

POSITIONING WHILE HITTING THE HEAVY BAG

Stage 2. The bag is strictly for power punching and setting up your power. Notice how my feet are positioned A and B. I'm set the same way I would be in a fight. Again, you want to simulate everything as close as possible to being in the ring. Here you see my feet are planted firmly when I'm hitting the heavy bag. I'm not up on a hill; they're planted and set for a power punch.

EXHALE WHILE HITTING THE HEAVY BAG

Stage 3. Breathing and how you breathe is very important. You release the tension from your body when you're getting ready to release a hard punch. Here you see me exhaling almost like a blowfish as I hit the bag A. The power goes through your body and with it your breathing too and . When you throw a punch, holding your breath as you release the punch takes away the steam of the punch B. You're choking the punch. Breathing out releases the power because you're throwing the punch without being clogged up and holding your breath C.

WHAT NOT TO DO WHEN HITTING THE HEAVY BAG

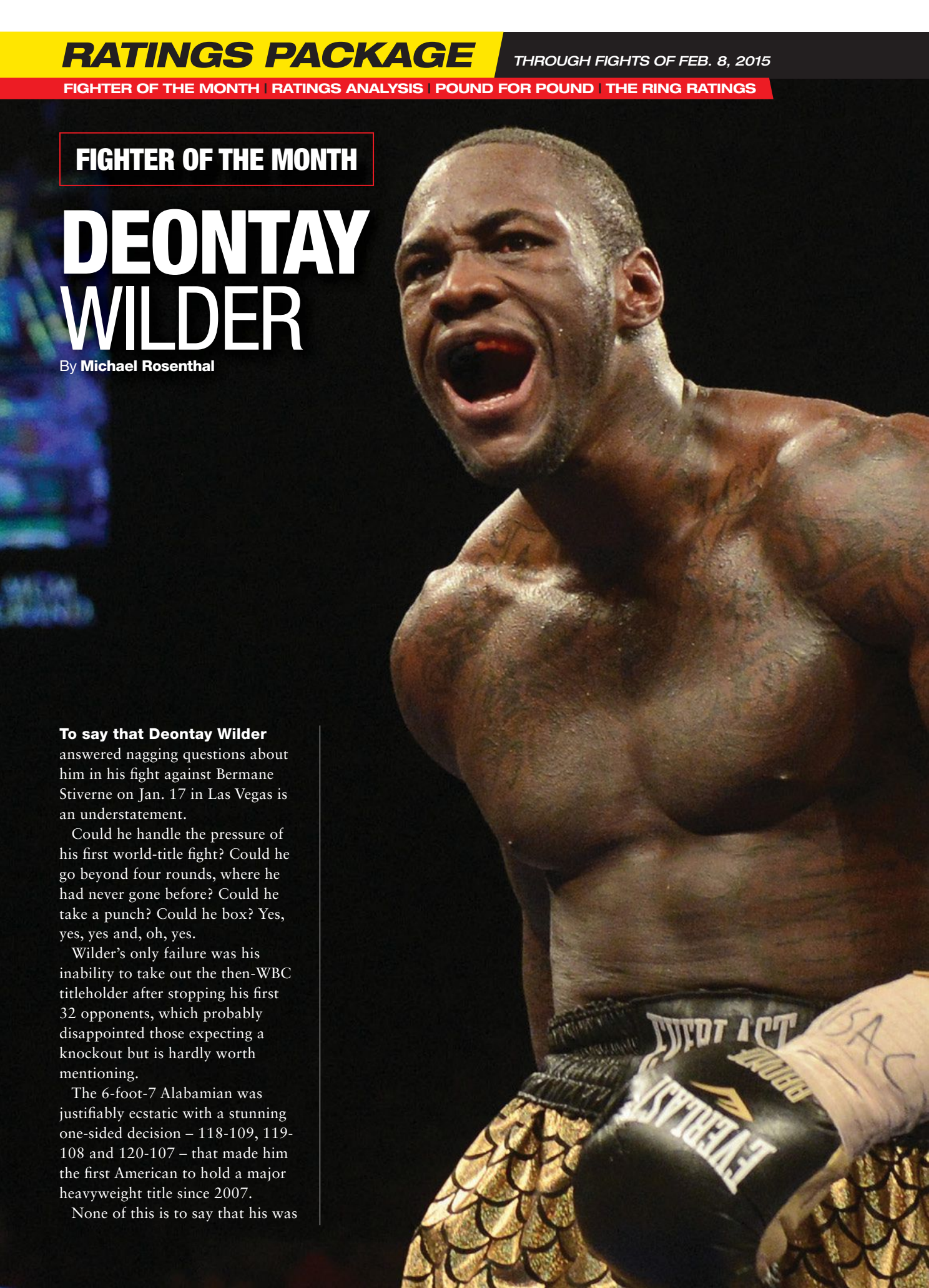
Stage 4. You don't want to hit the heavy bag without wearing gloves A. The biggest risk you face is injuring your hands, which are your most important tools in the ring B. Plus, you want to acclimate yourself to what you'll be faced with and what you'll be wearing in the ring during a fight. You want to be as authentic as possible C. You want to avoid irritating your skin and protect your knuckles, so you need to wear gloves when hitting the heavy bag.

Bernard Hopkins' popular how-to series on boxing fundamentals appears each month in THE RING. The feature includes a video component. To watch and listen to Hopkins giving instruction, just scan the QR code at left or go to http://bit.ly/the-heavy-bag.

FIGHTER OF THE MONTH

DEONTAY WILDER

By **Michael Rosenthal**



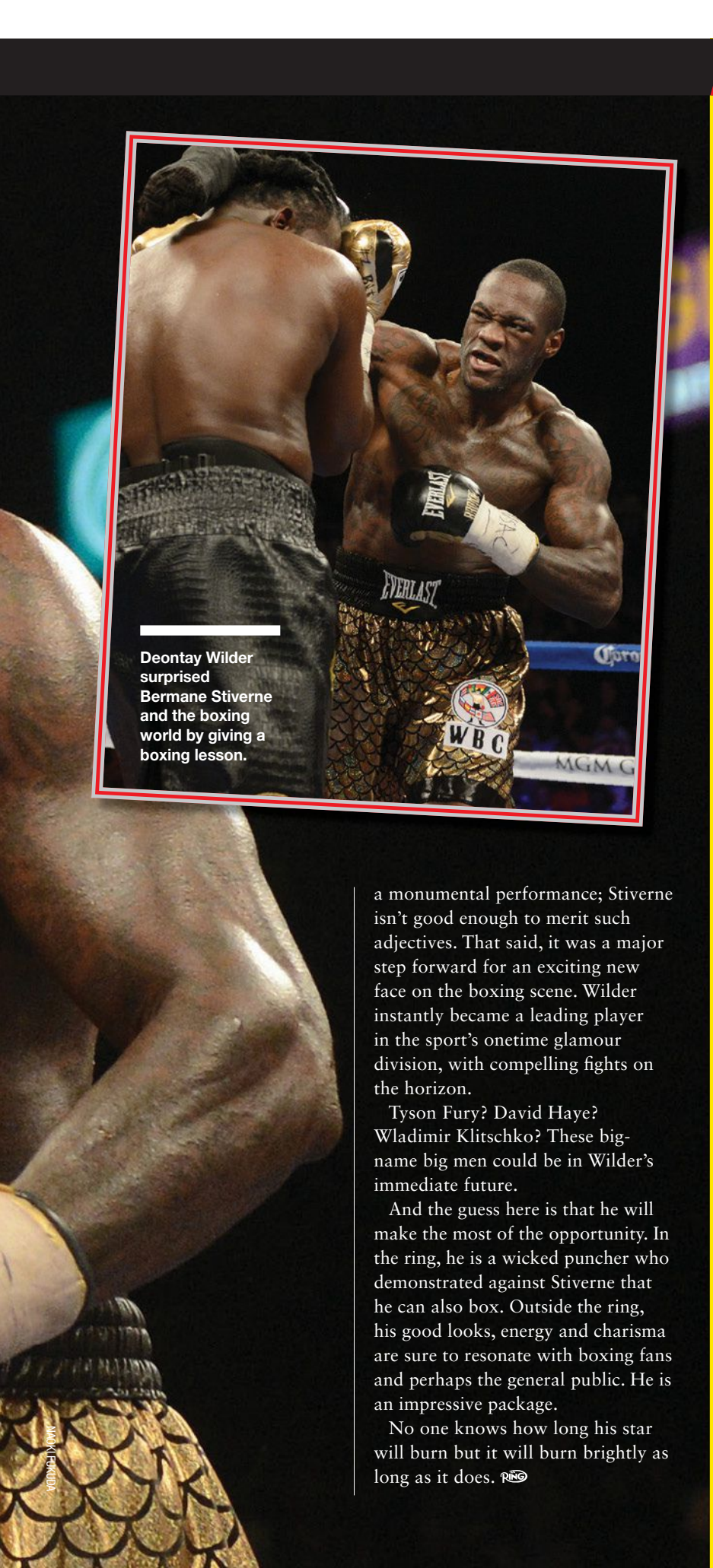
To say that Deontay Wilder answered nagging questions about him in his fight against Bermane Stiverne on Jan. 17 in Las Vegas is an understatement.

Could he handle the pressure of his first world-title fight? Could he go beyond four rounds, where he had never gone before? Could he take a punch? Could he box? Yes, yes, yes and, oh, yes.

Wilder's only failure was his inability to take out the then-WBC titleholder after stopping his first 32 opponents, which probably disappointed those expecting a knockout but is hardly worth mentioning.

The 6-foot-7 Alabamian was justifiably ecstatic with a stunning one-sided decision – 118-109, 119-108 and 120-107 – that made him the first American to hold a major heavyweight title since 2007.

None of this is to say that his was



Deontay Wilder surprised Bermane Stiverne and the boxing world by giving a boxing lesson.

MAOKI FUKUDA

a monumental performance; Stiverne isn't good enough to merit such adjectives. That said, it was a major step forward for an exciting new face on the boxing scene. Wilder instantly became a leading player in the sport's onetime glamour division, with compelling fights on the horizon.

Tyson Fury? David Haye? Wladimir Klitschko? These big-name big men could be in Wilder's immediate future.

And the guess here is that he will make the most of the opportunity. In the ring, he is a wicked puncher who demonstrated against Stiverne that he can also box. Outside the ring, his good looks, energy and charisma are sure to resonate with boxing fans and perhaps the general public. He is an impressive package.

No one knows how long his star will burn but it will burn brightly as long as it does. RING

RATINGS ANALYSIS

POUND FOR POUND: No change.

HEAVYWEIGHTS: Deontay Wilder the knockout artist contender became Deontay Wilder the world champion boxer with a thoroughly one-sided decision win over Bermane Stiverne. Wilder took Stiverne's No. 2 spot along with his WBC belt while Stiverne slipped to Wilder's old perch at No. 6.

CRUISERWEIGHTS: No change.

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS: No change.

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS: No change.

MIDDLEWEIGHTS: No change.

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS: No change.

WELTERWEIGHTS: No change.

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS: Mike Alvarado (No. 5 last month) was dropped after taking a beating from Brandon Rios (unrated) at welterweight. It was Alvarado's fourth loss in five fights (the win and one of the losses also against Rios) and his second in a row north of 140 pounds. Mauricio Herrera entered at No. 10.

LIGHTWEIGHTS: Englishman Kevin Mitchell (unrated last month) knocked Daniel Estrada (No. 8 at the time) out of the ratings with an eighth-round stoppage in London. Mitchell came in at No. 9, pushing Sharif Bogere up into the vacant No. 8 spot.

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS: Juan Carlos Burgos (No. 4 last month) hasn't fought since his unanimous-decision loss to Mikey Garcia in January 2014 so he was removed. Everyone formerly below Burgos moved up a notch and undefeated Puerto Rican Jose Pedraza entered at No. 10.

FEATHERWEIGHTS: No change.

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS: No change.

BANTAMWEIGHTS: No change.

JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS: No change.

FLYWEIGHTS: No change.

JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS: No change.

STRAWWEIGHTS: Wanheng Menayothin (No. 4 last month) successfully defended his WBC belt by outpointing unrated novice Jeffrey Galero. That wasn't a significant win but his cumulative accomplishments lifted him to No. 3, ahead of the very talented but still green Kosei Tanaka, who has fought as a pro only four times.

No. 7-rated super middleweight Gilberto Ramirez (right) outpointed Maxim Vlasov to remain undefeated.

JUSTIN EDMONDS/GETTY IMAGES

THE FIGURES UNDER THE FIGHTERS' NAMES INDICATE: WEEKS IN THE RATINGS • COUNTRY • RECORD

HEAVYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT UNLIMITED

C WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO
508 • Ukraine • 63-3-0 (53 KOs)

1. ALEXANDER POVETKIN
382 • Russia • 28-1-0 (20 KOs)

2. DEONTAY WILDER
64 • U.S. • 33-0-0 (32 KOs)

3. TYSON FURY
156 • U.K. • 23-0-0 (17 KOs)

4. KUBRAT PULEV
174 • Bulgaria • 20-1-0 (11 KOs)

5. BRYANT JENNINGS
47 • U.S. • 19-0-0 (10 KOs)

6. BERMANE STIVERNE
94 • Canada • 24-2-1 (21 KOs)

7. VYACHESLAV GLAZKOV
48 • Ukraine • 19-0-1 (12 KOs)

8. MIKE PEREZ
36 • Cuba • 21-1-1 (13 KOs)

9. CHRIS ARREOLA
75 • U.S. • 35-4-0 (31 KOs)

10. RUSLAN CHAGAEV
14 • Uzbek. • 33-2-1 (20 KOs)

CRUISERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 200 LBS

C YOAN PABLO HERNANDEZ
176 • Cuba • 29-1-0 (14 KOs)

1. MARCO HUCK
153 • Germany • 38-2-1 (26 KOs)

2. GRIGORY DROZD
71 • Russia • 39-1-0 (27 KOs)

3. DENIS LEBEDEV
263 • Russia • 26-2-0 (20 KOs)

4. KRZYSZTOF WLODARCZYK
505 • Poland • 49-3-1 (35 KOs)

5. OLA AFOLABI
310 • U.K. • 21-3-4 (10 KOs)

6. FIRAT ARSLAN
119 • Germany • 34-8-2 (21 KOs)

7. ILUNGA MAKABU
83 • Congo • 18-1-0 (17 KOs)

8. THABISO MCHUNU
69 • S. Africa • 17-1-0 (11 KOs)

9. YOURI KALENGA
34 • Congo • 21-1-0 (14 KOs)

10. RAKHIM CHAKHKIEV
29 • Russia • 21-1-0 (16 KOs)

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 175 LBS

C ADONIS STEVENSON
88 • Canada • 25-1-0 (21 KOs)

1. SERGEY KOVALEV
108 • Russia • 26-0-1 (23 KOs)

2. BERNARD HOPKINS
454 • U.S. • 55-7-2 (32 KOs)

3. JEAN PASCAL
83 • Canada • 29-2-1 (17 KOs)

4. JUERGEN BRAEHMER
137 • Germany • 45-2-0 (33 KOs)

5. ELEIDER ALVAREZ
48 • Colombia • 16-0-0 (9 KOs)

6. ISAAC CHILEMBA
146 • Malawi • 23-2-2 (10 KOs)

7. ANDRZEJ FONFARA
39 • Poland • 26-3-0 (15 KOs)

8. NADJIB MOHAMMEDI
21 • France • 36-3-0 (22 KOs)

9. GABRIEL CAMPILLO
19 • Spain • 25-6-1 (12 KOs)

10. ARTUR BETERBIEV
9 • Russia • 7-0-0 (7 KOs)

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 168 LBS

C ANDRE WARD
301 • U.S. • 27-0-0 (14 KOs)

1. CARL FROCH
454 • U.K. • 33-2-0 (24 KOs)

2. ARTHUR ABRAHAM
279 • Armenia • 41-4-0 (28 KOs)

3. GEORGE GROVES
166 • U.K. • 21-2-0 (16 KOs)

4. JAMES DEGALE
88 • U.K. • 20-1-0 (14 KOs)

5. ROBERT STIEGLITZ
287 • Russia • 47-4-1 (27 KOs)

6. ANTHONY DIRRELL
26 • U.S. • 27-0-1 (22 KOs)

7. GILBERTO RAMIREZ
31 • Mexico • 31-0-0 (24 KOs)

8. ANDRE DIRRELL
24 • U.S. • 24-1-0 (16 KOs)

9. JULIO CESAR CHAVEZ JR.
17 • Mexico • 48-1-1 (32 KOs)

10. FELIX STURM
14 • Germany • 39-4-3 (18 KOs)

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 160 LBS

C MIGUEL COTTO
36 • P.R. • 39-4-0 (32 KOs)

1. GENNADY GOLOVKIN
166 • Kaz. • 31-0-0 (28 KOs)

2. PETER QUILLIN
141 • U.S. • 31-0-0 (22 KOs)

3. SERGIO MARTINEZ
253 • Argentina • 51-3-2 (28 KOs)

4. DANIEL GEALE
296 • Australia • 31-3-0 (16 KOs)

5. HASSAN N'DAM
56 • Cameroon • 31-1-0 (18 KOs)

6. MARTIN MURRAY
167 • U.K. • 29-1-1 (12 KOs)

7. ANDY LEE
9 • Ireland • 34-2-0 (24 KOs)

8. JERMAIN TAYLOR
18 • U.S. • 33-4-1 (20 KOs)

9. BILLY JOE SAUNDERS
11 • U.K. • 21-0-0 (11 KOs)

10. DANIEL JACOBS
9 • U.S. • 28-1-0 (25 KOs)

JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 154 LBS

C FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR.
145 • U.S. • 47-0-0 (26 KOs)

1. CANELO ALVAREZ
222 • Mexico • 44-1-1 (31 KOs)

2. ERISLANDY LARA
189 • Cuba • 20-2-2 (12 KOs)

3. AUSTIN TROUT
141 • U.S. • 28-2-0 (15 KOs)

4. DEMETRIUS ANDRADE
96 • U.S. • 21-0-0 (14 KOs)

5. VANES MARTIROSYAN
271 • U.S. • 35-1-1 (21 KOs)

6. JERMELL CHARLO
66 • U.S. • 25-0-0 (11 KOs)

7. JERMALL CHARLO
35 • U.S. • 20-0-0 (16 KOs)

8. CORNELIUS BUNDRAGE
18 • U.S. • 34-5-0 (19 KOs)

9. CARLOS MOLINA
189 • Mexico • 22-6-2 (6 KOs)

10. JULIAN WILLIAMS
9 • U.S. • 18-0-1 (11 KOs)

WELTERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 147 LBS

C FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR.
178 • U.S. • 47-0-0 (26 KOs)

1. MANNY PACQUIAO
275 • Phil. • 57-5-2 (38 KOs)

2. KELL BROOK
199 • U.K. • 33-0-0 (22 KOs)

3. AMIR KHAN
41 • U.K. • 30-3-0 (19 KOs)

4. TIM BRADLEY
140 • U.S. • 31-1-1 (12 KOs)

5. JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ
114 • Mexico • 56-7-1 (40 KOs)

6. SHAWN PORTER
62 • U.S. • 24-1-1 (15 KOs)

7. KEITH THURMAN
101 • U.S. • 24-0-0 (21 KOs)

8. ROBERT GUERRERO
133 • U.S. • 32-2-1 (18 KOs)

9. MARCOS MAIDANA
61 • Argentina • 35-5-0 (31 KOs)

10. DIEGO CHAVES
9 • Argentina • 23-2-1 (19 KOs)

JR. WELTERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 140 LBS

C DANNY GARCIA
201 • U.S. • 29-0-0 (17 KOs)

1. LUCAS MATTHYSSE
201 • Argentina • 36-3-0 (34 KOs)

2. LAMONT PETERSON
103 • U.S. • 33-2-1 (17 KOs)

3. CHRIS ALGIERI
35 • U.S. • 20-1-0 (8 KOs)

4. RUSLAN PROVODNIKOV
114 • Russia • 23-2-0 (16 KOs)

5. ADRIEN BRONER
41 • U.S. • 29-1-0 (22 KOs)

6. JESSIE VARGAS
44 • U.S. • 26-0-0 (9 KOs)

7. VIKTOR POSTOL
78 • Ukraine • 26-0-0 (11 KOs)

8. KHABIB ALLAKHVERDIEV
137 • Russia • 19-1-0 (9 KOs)

9. THOMAS DULORME
10 • P.R. • 22-1-0 (14 KOs)

10. MAURICIO HERRERA
3 • U.S. • 21-5-0 (7 KOs)

LIGHTWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 135 LBS

C TERENCE CRAWFORD
85 • U.S. • 25-0-0 (17 KOs)

1. OMAR FIGUEROA
57 • U.S. • 24-0-1 (18 KOs)

2. RAYMUNDO BELTRAN
133 • Mexico • 29-7-1 (17 KOs)

3. RICHAR ABRIL
21 • Cuba • 19-3-1 (8 KOs)

4. MICKEY BEY
22 • U.S. • 21-1-1 (10 KOs)

5. MIGUEL VAZQUEZ
236 • Mexico • 34-4-0 (13 KOs)

6. JUAN DIAZ
54 • U.S. • 40-4-0 (19 KOs)

7. JORGE LINARES
49 • Venezuela • 38-3-0 (25 KOs)

8. SHARIF BOGERE
15 • Uganda • 26-1-0 (18 KOs)

9. KEVIN MITCHELL
4 • U.K. • 39-2-0 (29 KOs)

10. DIERRY JEAN
11 • Canada • 27-1-0 (19 KOs)

JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 130 LBS

C (VACANT)

1. TAKASHI UCHIYAMA
267 • Japan • 22-0-1 (18 KOs)

2. RANCES BARTHELEMY
58 • Cuba • 21-0-0 (12 KOs)

3. TAKASHI MIURA
97 • Japan • 28-2-2 (21 KOs)

4. BRYAN VASQUEZ
9 • Costa Rica • 34-1-0 (18 KOs)

5. DIEGO MAGDALENO
194 • U.S. • 27-1-0 (11 KOs)

6. ROMAN MARTINEZ
336 • P.R. • 28-2-2 (17 KOs)

7. FRANCISCO VARGAS
31 • Mexico • 21-0-1 (15 KOs)

8. ORLANDO SALIDO
21 • Mexico • 42-12 -2 (29 KOs)

9. JAVIER FORTUNA
15 • Dom. Rep. • 27-0-1 (20 KOs)

10. JOSE PEDRAZA
2 • P.R. • 19-0-0 (12 KOs)

FEATHERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 126 LBS

C (VACANT)

1. JHONNY GONZALEZ
202 • Mexico • 57-8-0 (48 KOs)

2. NICHOLAS WALTERS
114 • Jamaica • 25-0-0 (21 KOs)

3. ABNER MARES
93 • Mexico • 28-1-1 (15 KOs)

4. VASYL LOMACHENKO
41 • Ukraine • 3-1-0 (1 KO)*

5. EVGENY GRADOVICH
102 • Russia • 19-0-1 (9 KOs)

6. NONITO DONAIRE
59 • Phil. • 33-3-0 (21 KOs)

7. SIMPIWE VETYEKA
62 • S. Africa • 27-3-0 (16 KOs)

8. LEE SELBY
48 • U.K. • 20-1-0 (8 KOs)

9. JESUS CUELLAR
18 • Argentina • 26-1-0 (20 KOs)

10. JAYSON VELEZ
11 • P.R. • 22-0-1 (16 KOs)

JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 122 LBS

C GUILLERMO RIGONDEAUX
223 • Cuba • 15-0-0 (10 KOs)

1. CARL FRAMPTON
125 • U.K. • 19-0-0 (13 KOs)

2. LEO SANTA CRUZ
93 • U.S. • 29-0-1 (17 KOs)

3. SCOTT QUIGG
116 • U.K. • 30-0-2 (22 KOs)

4. GENESIS SERVANIA
48 • Phil. • 26-0-0 (11 KOs)

5. CHRIS AVALOS
37 • U.S. • 25-2-0 (19 KOs)

6. KID GALAHAD
26 • U.K. • 18-0-0 (9 KOs)

7. ANDRES GUTIERREZ
21 • Mexico • 31-0-1 (22 KOs)

8. SHINGO WAKE
12 • Japan • 17-4-2 (10 KOs)

9. REY VARGAS
9 • Mexico • 23-0-0 (20 KOs)

10. ALBERT PAGARA
6 • Phil. • 22-0-0 (15 KOs)

HOW OUR RATINGS ARE COMPILED

Championship vacancies can be filled in the following two ways: 1. THE RING's Nos. 1 and 2 contenders fight one another; 2. If the Nos. 1 and 2 contenders chose not to fight one another and either of them fights No. 3, No. 4 or No. 5, the winner may be awarded THE RING belt if the Editorial Board deems the contenders worthy.

A champion can lose his belt in six situations: 1. The Champion loses a fight in the weight class in which he is champion; 2. The Champion moves to another weight class; 3. The Champion does not schedule a fight in any weight class for 18 months; 4. The Champion does not schedule a fight at his championship weight for 18 months (even if he fights at another weight); 5. The Champion does not schedule a fight with a Top-5 contender from any weight class for two years; 6. The Champion retires.

THE RING Ratings Chairman Chuck Giampa considers input from the Ratings Panel of boxing journalists from around the world but has final say on all changes. That applies to both the pound-for-pound and divisional ratings.

Records provided by boxrec.com

**** The record shown for Vasyl Lomachenko is the one listed by boxrec.com. However, Lomachenko was paid to participate in the World Series of Boxing six times during 2013, with a record of 6-0.***

THE RING RATINGS

BANTAMWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 118 LBS

C (VACANT)

1. **SHINSUKE YAMANAKA**
171 • Japan • 22-0-2 (16 KOs)
2. **JUAN CARLOS PAYANO**
20 • Dom. Rep. • 16-0-0 (8 KOs)
3. **ANSELMO MORENO**
359 • Panama • 35-3-1 (12 KOs)
4. **KOKI KAMEDA**
217 • Japan • 33-1-0 (18 KOs)
5. **MALCOLM TUNACAO**
212 • Phil. • 35-3-3 (20 KOs)
6. **HUGO RUIZ**
147 • Mexico • 35-2-0 (31 KOs)
7. **TOMOKI KAMEDA**
80 • Japan • 31-0-0 (19 KOs)
8. **JAMIE MCDONNELL**
93 • U.K. • 25-2-1 (12 KOs)
9. **RANDY CABALLERO**
16 • U.S. • 22-0-0 (13 KOs)
10. **KIKO MARTINEZ**
9 • Spain • 32-5-0 (24 KOs)

JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 115 LBS

C (VACANT)

1. **NAOYA INOUE**
6 • Japan • 8-0-0 (7 KOs)
2. **CARLOS CUADRAS**
144 • Mexico • 31-0-1 (25 KOs)
3. **SRISAKET SOR RUNGVISAI**
93 • Thailand • 32-4-1 (29 KOs)
4. **OMAR NARVAEZ**
249 • Argentina • 43-2-2 (23 KOs)
5. **ZOLANI TETE**
63 • S. Africa • 19-3-0 (16 KOs)
6. **ARTHUR VILLANUEVA**
95 • Phil. • 27-0-0 (14 KOs)
7. **OLEYDONG SITHSAMERCHAI**
124 • Thailand • 55-1-1 (21 KOs)
8. **FELIPE ORUCUTA**
90 • Mexico • 29-3-0 (24 KOs)
9. **MCJOE ARROYO**
35 • P.R. • 16-0-0 (8 KOs)
10. **KOHEI KONO**
41 • Japan • 30-8-1 (13 KOs)

FLYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 112 LBS

C ROMAN GONZALEZ
66 • Nicaragua • 41-0-0 (35 KOs)

1. **JUAN FRANCISCO ESTRADA**
97 • Mexico • 31-2-0 (22 KOs)
2. **BRIAN VILORIA**
188 • U.S. • 35-4-0 (21 KOs)
3. **EDGAR SOSA**
144 • Mexico • 51-8-0 (30 KOs)
4. **JUAN CARLOS REVECO**
176 • Argentina • 35-1-0 (19 KOs)
5. **AMNAT RUENROENG**
40 • Thailand • 14-0-0 (5 KOs)
6. **MORUTI MTHALANE**
48 • S. Africa • 31-2-0 (20 KOs)
7. **GIOVANI SEGURA**
67 • Mexico • 32-4-1 (28 KOs)
8. **MCWILLIAMS ARROYO**
23 • P.R. • 15-2-0 (13 KOs)
9. **KAZUTO IOKA**
21 • Japan • 16-1-0 (10 KOs)
10. **JOHNRIEL CASIMERO**
9 • Phil. • 21-2-0 (13 KOs)

JR. FLYWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 108 LBS

C DONNIE NIETES
175 • Phil. • 34-1-4 (20 KOs)

1. **PEDRO GUEVARA**
98 • Mexico • 24-1-1 (16 KOs)
2. **MOISES FUENTES**
102 • Mexico • 20-2-1 (11 KOs)
3. **ADRIAN HERNANDEZ**
199 • Mexico • 30-3-1 (19 KOs)
4. **AKIRA YAEGASHI**
21 • Japan • 20-5-0 (10 KOs)
5. **FELIX ALVARADO**
100 • Nicaragua • 19-2-0 (16 KOs)
6. **MILAN MELINDO**
13 • Phil. • 32-1-0 (12 KOs)
7. **RYOICHI TAGUCHI**
9 • Japan • 21-2-1 (8 KOs)
8. **RANDY PETALCORIN**
40 • Phil. • 22-1-1 (17 KOs)
9. **RAUL GARCIA**
6 • Mexico • 36-3-1 (22 KOs)
10. **ALBERTO ROSSEL**
94 • Peru • 32-9-0 (13 KOs)

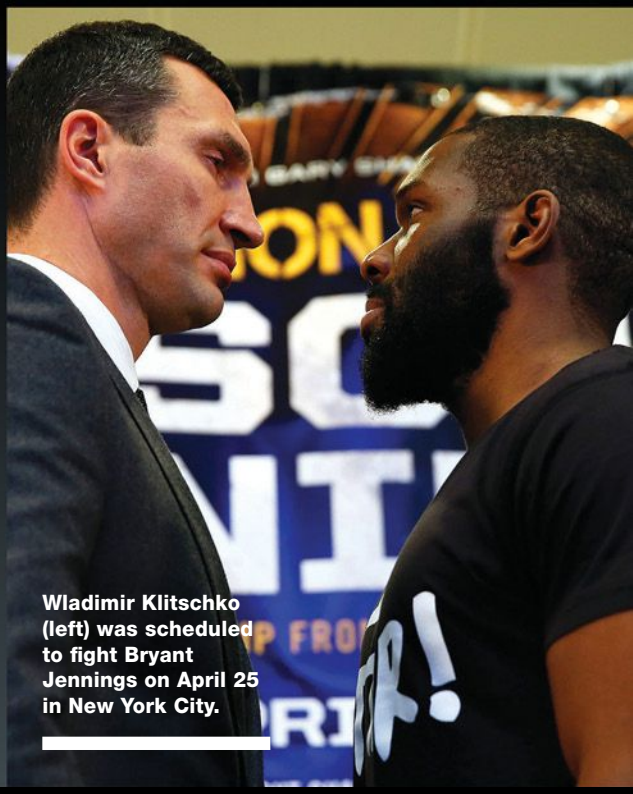
STRAWWEIGHTS
WEIGHT LIMIT: 105 LBS

C (VACANT)

1. **HEKKIE BUDLER**
125 • S. Africa • 27-1-0 (9 KOs)
2. **KATSUNARI TAKAYAMA**
98 • Japan • 28-7-0 (11 KOs)
3. **WANHENG MENAYOTHIN**
191 • Thailand • 37-0-0 (12 KOs)
4. **KOSEI TANAKA**
15 • Japan • 4-0-0 (2 KOs)
5. **KNOCKOUT CP FRESHMART**
19 • Thailand • 9-0-0 (5 KOs)
6. **CARLOS BUITRAGO**
122 • Nicaragua • 27-1-1 (16 KOs)
7. **OSWALDO NOVOA**
53 • Mexico • 14-5-1 (9 KOs)
8. **RYUJI HARA**
76 • Japan • 18-1-0 (10 KOs)
9. **XIONG ZHAO ZHONG**
13 • China • 24-6-1 (14 KOs)
10. **DENVER CUELLO**
13 • Phil. • 35-5-6 (23 KOs)

POUND FOR POUND

1. **FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR.**
178 • U.S. • 47-0-0 (26 KOs)
2. **WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO**
236 • Ukraine • 63-3-0 (53 KOs)
3. **MANNY PACQUIAO**
585 • Phil. • 57-5-2 (38 KOs)
4. **ANDRE WARD**
201 • U.S. • 27-0-0 (14 KOs)
5. **ROMAN GONZALEZ**
36 • Nicaragua • 41-0-0 (35 KOs)
6. **GUILLERMO RIGONDEAUX**
77 • Cuba • 15-0-0 (10 KOs)
7. **TIM BRADLEY**
231 • U.S. • 31-1-1 (12 KOs)
8. **JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ**
414 • Mexico • 56-7-1 (40 KOs)
9. **CARL FROCH**
61 • U.K. • 33-2-0 (24 KOs)
10. **CANELO ALVAREZ**
93 • Mexico • 44-1-1 (31 KOs)



Wladimir Klitschko (left) was scheduled to fight Bryant Jennings on April 25 in New York City.

THE RING POLICY ON RATED BOXERS WHO TEST POSITIVE FOR PERFORMANCE-ENHANCING DRUGS

THE RING will remove from its ratings any rated boxer — including a champion — if such boxer at some point undergoes drug testing (Olympic-style or otherwise) and that boxer tests positive for a performance-enhancing drug.

In the event that a boxer has undergone testing in which the boxer provides two samples ("A" and "B") and the boxer's "A" and subsequent "B" samples test positive for a performance-enhancing drug or if his "A" sample tests positive and he waives his right to have the "B" sample tested then the boxer shall immediately be removed from the ratings.

A boxer whose "A" sample tested positive and is awaiting the results of his "B" sample will not be allowed to fight for a championship or rise in the ratings.

A boxer who is removed because of a positive test will have the opportunity to earn his way back into the ratings after any suspension period is completed.

A boxer who is dropped also may be reinstated if the testing agency subsequently reverses its decision or a court of competent jurisdiction finds that the test result was invalid.

RATED FIGHTERS BY COUNTRY

●	UNITED STATES	38*	
●	MEXICO	24	▼ 2
●	UNITED KINGDOM	15	▲ 1
●	JAPAN	14	
●	PHILIPPINES	11	
●	RUSSIA	10	
●	ARGENTINA	7	
●	PUERTO RICO	7	▲ 1
●	CUBA	6	
●	SOUTH AFRICA	5	
●	THAILAND	5	
●	CANADA	4	
●	GERMANY	4	
●	UKRAINE	4	
●	NICARAGUA	3	
●	CONGO	2	
●	DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	2	
●	POLAND	2	
●	SPAIN	2	
	ARMENIA	1	
	AUSTRALIA	1	
	BULGARIA	1	
	CAMEROON	1	
	CHINA	1	
	COLOMBIA	1	
	COSTA RICA	1	
	FRANCE	1	
	IRELAND	1	
	JAMAICA	1	
	KAZAKHSTAN	1	
	MALAWI	1	
	PANAMA	1	
	PERU	1	
	UGANDA	1	
	UZBEKISTAN	1	
	VENEZUELA	1	

Countries out (from last month): *None.*

Countries in: *None.*

** Includes two ratings for Floyd Mayweather Jr. (junior middleweight and welterweight).*

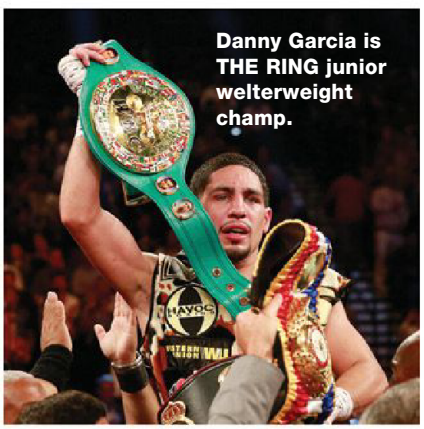
BIG VS. SMALL

Three nations – U.S., U.K. and Russia – dominate the heavier divisions (down to lightweight) and three others – Mexico, Japan and the Philippines – dominate the lighter divisions in THE RING Ratings. Here are their totals division by division.

DIVISION	BIG 3	SMALL 3
HEAVYWEIGHTS	5	0
CRUISERWEIGHTS	4	0
LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS	3	0
SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS	7	2
MIDDLEWEIGHTS	5	0
JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS	8	2
WELTERWEIGHTS	7	2
JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS	8	0
LIGHTWEIGHTS	5	2
JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS	1	4
FEATHERWEIGHTS	2	3
JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS	5	5
BANTAMWEIGHTS	2	5
JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS	0	5
FLYWEIGHTS	1	5
JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS	0	9
STRAWWEIGHTS	0	5
TOTAL	63	49

Note: *Floyd Mayweather Jr., who is both junior middleweight and welterweight champion, is counted twice for the purposes of this chart.*

WHO'S NO. 1?



Danny Garcia is THE RING junior welterweight champ.

MIKE STOBE/GETTY IMAGES

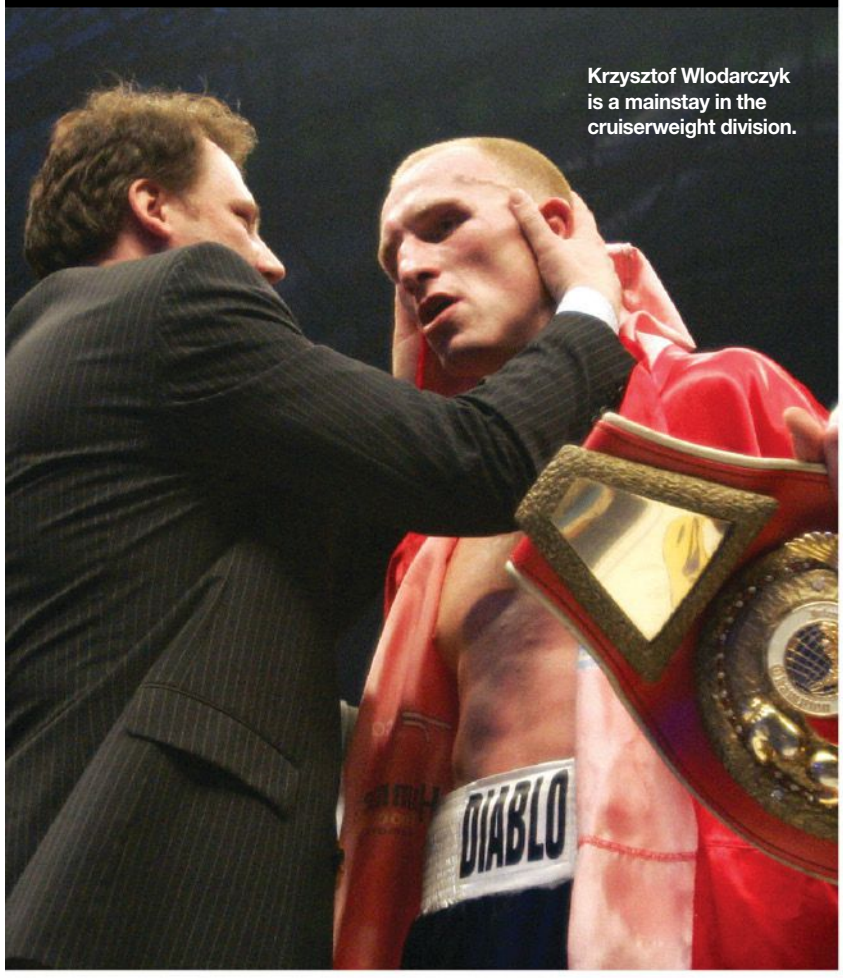
No one will be surprised to learn that the U.S. has the most fighters at the top of the 17 weight classes, either champion or No. 1-rated fighter where the title is vacant. However, 10 countries can claim to have the best in at least one division. Here are those nations and the number of champions or Nos. 1:

5 UNITED STATES
3 JAPAN
2 CUBA
1 CANADA
1 MEXICO
1 NICARAGUA
1 PHILIPPINES
1 PUERTO RICO
1 SOUTH AFRICA
1 UKRAINE

FOCUS ON . . .

CRUISERWEIGHTS

A breakdown of THE RING Top 10 in one division each month, plus a list of fighters on the cusp of breaking through. This month: the cruiserweights.



Krzysztof Wlodarczyk is a mainstay in the cruiserweight division.

MOST WEEKS RATED: KRZYSZTOF WLODARCZYK **505**

FEWEST WEEKS RATED: RAKHIM CHAKHIEV **29**

OLDEST: FIRAT ARSLAN **44**

YOUNGEST: YOURI KALENGA **26**

MOST FIGHTS: WLODARCZYK **53**

FEWEST FIGHTS: THABISO MCHUNU **18**

HIGHEST WINNING PERCENTAGE: GRIGORY DROZD **97.5 PERCENT**

LOWEST WINNING PERCENTAGE: ARSLAN **77.3 PERCENT**

MOST KOS: WLODARCZYK **35**

FEWEST KOS: MCHUNU **11**

LONGEST CURRENT WINNING STREAK: ILUNGA MAKABU **18 FIGHTS**

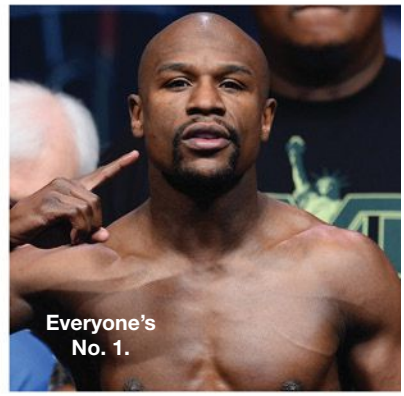
ON THE POUND-FOR-POUND LIST: NONE

TITLEHOLDERS IN THE TOP 10: DROZD **(WBC)**, YOAN PABLO HERNANDEZ **(RING, IBF)**, MARCO HUCK **(WBO)** AND DENIS LEBEDEV **(WBA)**

ON THE CUSP (IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER): TONY BELLEW, DMYTRO KUCHER, DMITRY KUDRYASHOV, BEIBUT SHUMENOV AND OLEKSANDR USYK

OLD SCHOOL 8

THE RING staff members' current champions in the original eight weight classes.



Everyone's No. 1.

MICHAEL ROSENTHAL RING MAGAZINE EDITOR

HEAVYWEIGHT: WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO
LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT: ANDRE WARD
MIDDLEWEIGHT: GENNADY GOLOVKIN
WELTERWEIGHT: FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR.
LIGHTWEIGHT: TERENCE CRAWFORD
FEATHERWEIGHT: GUILLERMO RIGONDEAUX
BANTAMWEIGHT: SHINSUKE YAMANAKA
FLYWEIGHT: ROMAN GONZALEZ

DOUG FISCHER RINGTV.COM EDITOR

HEAVYWEIGHT: WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO
LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT: SERGEY KOVALEV
MIDDLEWEIGHT: GENNADY GOLOVKIN
WELTERWEIGHT: FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR.
LIGHTWEIGHT: TERENCE CRAWFORD
FEATHERWEIGHT: NICHOLAS WALTERS
BANTAMWEIGHT: SHINSUKE YAMANAKA
FLYWEIGHT: ROMAN GONZALEZ

BRIAN HARTY RING MAGAZINE MANAGING EDITOR

HEAVYWEIGHT: WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO
LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHT: SERGEY KOVALEV
MIDDLEWEIGHT: GENNADY GOLOVKIN
WELTERWEIGHT: FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR.
LIGHTWEIGHT: TERENCE CRAWFORD
FEATHERWEIGHT: GUILLERMO RIGONDEAUX
BANTAMWEIGHT: NAOYA INOUE
FLYWEIGHT: ROMAN GONZALEZ

Note: *This is how the weights break down: Heavyweight includes cruiserweight, light heavyweight includes super middleweight, all divisions middleweight through flyweight include the "junior" versions, and flyweight also includes strawweight.*

WLODARCZYK: JANEK SKARZYNSKI/AFP/GETTY IMAGES; MAYWEATHER: ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

Just Around The Corner... All Across The Nation.

With over 4,200 O'Reilly Auto Parts stores in 42 states, we're never far from home.

OReillyAuto.com

Better Parts... Better Prices, Everyday!™

HOW IT

TWO QUIRKS OF FATE PLAYED A KEY ROLE IN **MAYWEATHER** AND **PACQUIAO'S** AGREEMENT TO FIGHT MAY 2

By **Norm Frauenheim**
Illustration by **Mike Meth**

Academics like to say that improvisation defines the art of negotiation. If true, the art's latest masterpiece would be Floyd Mayweather Jr.-Manny Pacquiao. Improvisation saved it just when it looked as if the fight would be consigned to a dusty junkyard reserved for things that should have happened but never went anywhere.

Instead of getting parked in perpetuity alongside Lennox Lewis-Riddick Bowe and the DeLorean, Mayweather-Pacquiao is off and running toward a May 2 opening bell at Las Vegas' MGM Grand in a joint HBO-Showtime venture. It came together almost in spite of itself. There were insults, feuds and egos to overcome at every turn through a twisting process that often felt as though it would never end. Yet it did with a deal that appeared so unlikely just a couple of years ago.

Maybe a professor at the Harvard Business School can one day explain how and why it all transpired. An eminent psychologist or psychiatrist might have a few ideas, too. In the end, however, it was as simple as

HAPPENED

chance, which is something boxing understands better than any Ph.D. Improvisation is a boxing instinct. It's in the scarred DNA.

Fights are altered and decided by power that lands from an unforeseen angle and at an unpredictable moment. Essentially that's what happened in negotiations that had degenerated into a fight with no apparent resolution. It was a combo, two chance meetings that appeared like unexpected fronts on a weather map. First, at a restaurant in Los Angeles. Then, on an NBA floor in Miami.

Coincidence or not, the combination resulted in frank, face-to-face conversations on two levels – between the suits and then the fighters themselves. It was old-school yet a powerful reminder that business is still done in person instead of through social media.

In October, a waiter at a West Hollywood restaurant told CBS chief Les Moonves that Pacquiao trainer Freddie Roach ate at the same establishment, according to a story by Lance Pugmire of the Los Angeles Times. The waiter suggested that Moonves and Roach meet. They did. Roach then asked Moonves to meet with Pacquiao promoter Bob Arum. Although initially hesitant, according to Pugmire's story, Moonves met with the often-volatile Arum, who invited the CBS executive to his Beverly Hills home.

"It was the persistence of Les Moonves that got everyone talking rationally," Arum said. "With Les pushing it, people around this started acting like adults. Myself included."

A second meeting followed, this time at Moonves' home. It

Floyd Mayweather Jr. and Manny Pacquiao ran into each other at an NBA game in January – a fortuitous meeting.

included Arum and his bitter rival, Mayweather adviser Al Haymon.

For the first time, there was real progress in a process that had become about as orderly as a sandbox full of kids throwing dirt in each other's faces. Negotiations were down but not out. Suddenly, they were about to get off the deck.

"One of the main reasons this deal got done, as opposed to deals in the past, was because Leslie Moonves was part of the process," Stephen Espinoza, vice president of Showtime Sports, said in a conference call when the deal was announced on Feb. 20. "He was deeply committed to making this deal and was someone that all parties in this negotiation really respect.

"He was really the catalyst for seeing this through and refused to take no for an answer from any side."

Moonves also had a right to stubbornly insist on a deal in the first HBO-Showtime venture since the rival networks joined in a 2002 PPV telecast of Lewis' victory over Mike Tyson in Memphis. Showtime is a CBS subsidiary. It's on the hook for the six-fight deal with Mayweather costing a potential $250 million. The May 2 bout is the fifth fight on the contract, which thus far has reportedly shown a significant profit in only the second bout, a Mayweather decision over Canelo Alvarez. A $250 million price tag buys some demands.

But not even Moonves could do anything about the weather. As it turned out, it acted fortuitously in late January with a blizzard – Snowmageddon – that buried New England but resurrected the only fight casual fans have wanted to see for more than five years.

Pacquiao and Mayweather had courtside seats for a Milwaukee Bucks-Miami Heat game. Mayweather, a longtime hoops fan who bought friend and NBA playmaker guard Isaiah Thomas a Bentley for his birthday, has a home in South Beach. Pacquiao, who had been a judge at the Miss Universe pageant on Jan. 25, was still in South Florida only because his flight was canceled as a result of the storm in the Northeast. He had nowhere to go on the night of Jan. 27 so the player-coach for a pro team in the Philippines and friend of Heat coach Erik Spoelstra, a fellow Filipino, went to an NBA game.

He wound up going one-on-one with Mayweather, first at courtside in an exchange initiated by Mayweather and then in Pacquiao's hotel suite.

"It's one of those fortuitous circumstances we couldn't have planned," Espinoza said. "But we were lucky that it happened. That meeting between Floyd and Manny at the Miami Heat game certainly greased the wheels in getting through the final stages of this process."

Call it a force of nature, which is what some believe the welterweight fight will be. Arum said it could be the biggest bout since Muhammad Ali-Joe Frazier I on March 8, 1971, at Madison Square Garden. That one was called the Fight of the Century. The 20th Century.

In the 21st Century, there's plenty of debate about how Mayweather-Pacquiao will be remembered. There not much argument that Mayweather-Pacquiao is past its prime. It should have happened in 2010 but didn't, in part, because Pacquiao would not agree to Mayweather's demand for random drug tests.

Five years later, there's evidence of erosion in each fighter's skills. At the opening bell, Mayweather, about a 2½-to-1 favorite when the bout was announced, will be 38 years old. Pacquiao will be 36. Sugar Ray Leonard was 33 and Roberto Duran was 38 when they met in an unwatchable third fight on Dec. 7, 1989. No doubt, questions are there, but at least they're going to get answered.

The boxing business would have sustained a huge defeat had there been no fight at all. Last year, 2014, will be remembered for a steady decline in pay-per-view numbers for the premium bouts carried by HBO and Showtime. The inescapable conclusion is that casual fans, frustrated then by the futile Mayweather-Pacquiao talks, were headed for the exits.

Maybe, the chance to finally see

Mayweather's fight against Canelo Alvarez has been the only significant moneymaker under his contract with CBS/Showtime. Network execs pushed for another blockbuster.

AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES

Mayweather-Pacquiao will bring them back, even at a PPV price that could go as high as $100 for high-def. Projections within the industry and even at Vegas books put the PPV number for Mayweather-Pacquiao at 3 million-plus, which would break the record of 2.5 million set in Mayweather's 2007 decision over Oscar De La Hoya

It might not be a game-saver. But it's promising at a critical moment. For disaffected fans and skeptical advertisers, boxing had to prove it can still do business and Mayweather-Pacquiao shows that it can.

"We have to make this fight," Mayweather told Pacquiao during their hour-long summit in the Filipino congressman's hotel suite.

Mayweather's comment might rank as something of an understatement. Money is his motivation and nickname. By all accounts, he'll get 60 percent of a total purse worth a predicted $250 million. Pacquiao's 40 percent will pay a lot of taxes and fund a lot of political campaigns.

But projected revenue records also figure to underwrite the future of a sport that looks ahead and sees only uncertainty about how to proceed. With Haymon's emergence as boxing's most influential powerbroker, there are signs that the biz is moving away from the PPV model.

Haymon cards will appear on NBC, CBS and Spike TV. It's back to free television. To make that work, however, there needs to be an audience. If Mayweather-Pacquiao re-awakens interest in boxing,

maybe some in that audience will take a look at Haymon's fledgling series, PBC (Premium Boxing Champions). Ultimately, that rests in what Mayweather and Pacquiao do with their dangerous hands. But the anticipated drama is bound to sell as it never has in boxing history.

It's an opportunity that might never have been there if not for that chance meeting between Pacquiao and Mayweather. It's astonishing that it was a first. The two had never met personally before that somewhat awkward exchange at halftime of the Bucks' 109-102 victory over the Heat.

"That was really a turning point, no doubt about it," said Pacquiao adviser Michael Koncz, who was there and picked up an assist for making sure that the meeting transpired. "I had met Floyd many times. But that was the first time Manny and Floyd got to look at each other, eye to eye."

After all the years of taunts and insults framed within 140 characters, the rivals must have seen something else in each other. A staredown at a weigh-in is a ritual. It's for show. But this eye-to-eye encounter was business and about an engagement that neither could avoid any longer.

Without the meeting, there still might've been a deal, perhaps the result of the persistent Moonves. But it would have been less likely.

"Once that meeting took place, the tone changed," Koncz said. "Everything changed to the positive."

It was an eye-opener, so to speak, that must have included an acknowledgment of "now or never." Mayweather and Pacquiao looked at each other and saw the urgency. As the negotiations dragged on from November through Christmas and into February, there was talk that the fight might happen at a later date. Arum talked about June. If June

DAVID BECKER/GETTY IMAGES

Tim Bradley made it clear before their first fight that Manny Pacquiao would need a rematch. He was right. And Pacquiao took full advantage.

was a consideration, why not the mid-September date that celebrates Mexican Independence?

But any delay created a risk. Pacquiao needed an opponent and Mayweather had plans to fight on May 2, a celebration of Cinco de Mayo, no matter what. If they didn't fight each other, they planned to fight somebody. At times, Amir Khan appeared to be an alternate for both.

Pacquiao met with Khan in the U.K., where the Filipino also had a royal lunch with Prince Harry. Miguel Cotto was a name thrown around as a likely possibility for Mayweather, especially when there appeared to be no headway in the negotiations.

Mayweather probably would beat an aging Cotto in a rematch. But there was a chance the experienced Puerto Rican could spring an upset against an opponent whose feet don't move at the jackrabbit rate that took him in and out of danger five years ago.

Maybe Pacquiao beats Khan, who appeared to be rejuvenated in an impressive victory over Devon Alexander on Dec. 13. Against Alexander, Khan looked bigger and stronger, which would pose a clear and present danger to Pacquiao. The Filipino's power, which launched Rick Hatton into mid-air before crashing onto the canvas in a frightening KO six years ago, just isn't there anymore. He knocked down an overmatched Chris Algieri six times yet couldn't knock him out. Brandon Rios is nothing if not hittable. Pacquiao, who overwhelmed De La Hoya with a blitz of stinging punches from virtually ever angle, could not stop Rios either. Without the power, there's less reason to fear him and a better chance to beat him.

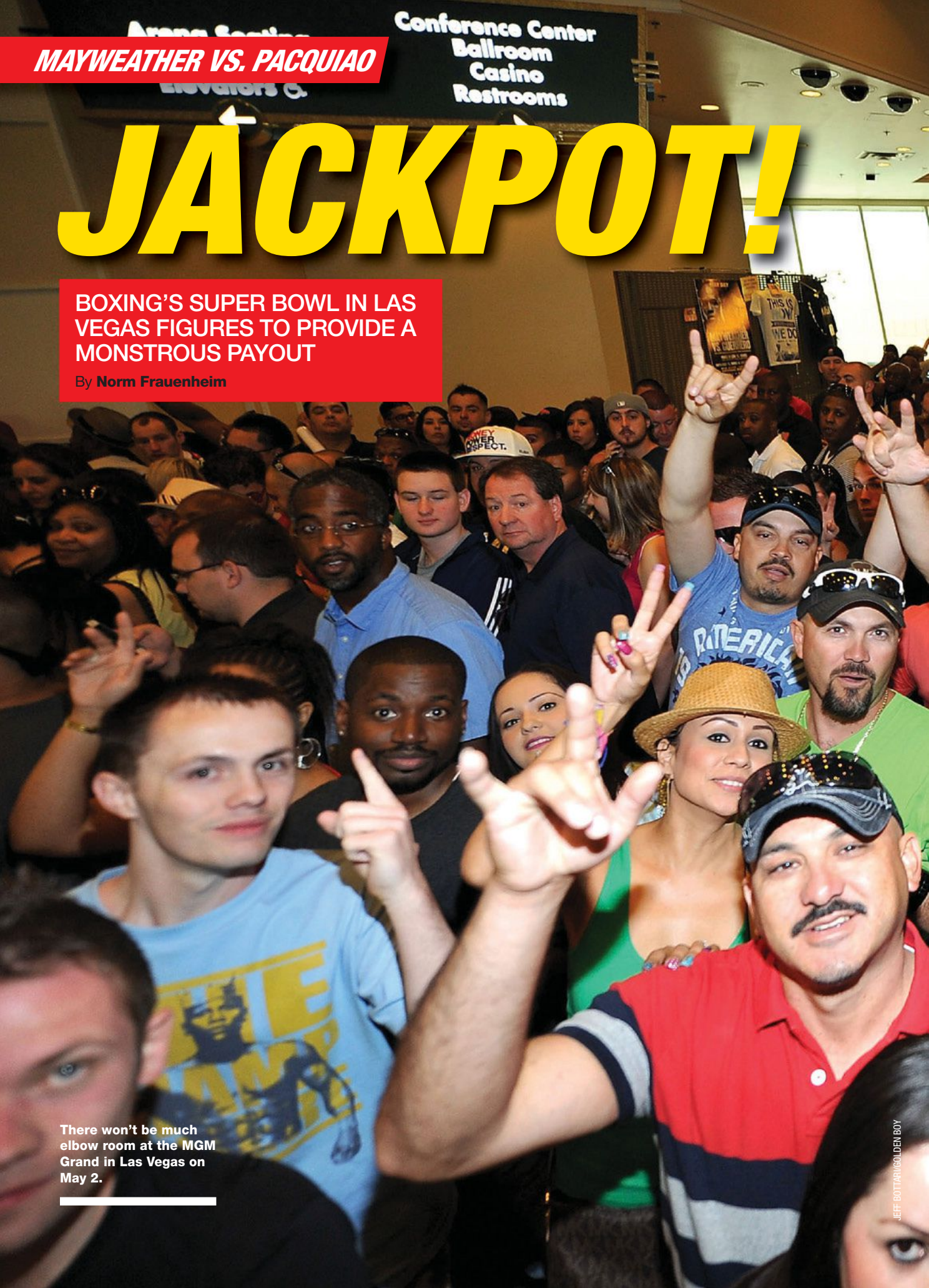
With unprecedented money hanging in the balance, it's a chance only a fool wouldn't take. Turns out, a waiter and a snowstorm took that chance out of the equation. Call it good fortune. Call it fate. Call it dumb luck. Whatever you call it, know this: It's the smart thing to do. Finally.

MAYWEATHER VS. PACQUIAO

JACKPOT!

BOXING'S SUPER BOWL IN LAS VEGAS FIGURES TO PROVIDE A MONSTROUS PAYOUT

By **Norm Frauenheim**



There won't be much elbow room at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas on May 2.

JEFF BOTTARI/GOLDEN BOY

Floyd Mayweather Jr. vs. Manny Pacquiao was called the Super Bowl of boxing almost at the very moment that the long-awaited deal for the bout was announced.

It's a loaded tag. It means hype. It means media. It means drama. It can mean just about anything, as long as it's big, flashy and expensive. Underline expensive. Put it in black and bold. Never red, because at its bottom line the $uper Bowl comparison is about money. It is the bottomless cash register that every sport aspires to be.

But even that isn't clear. There's some debate about the cash itself, or at least who and what it impacts. Nineteen days before Mayweather finally announced that he had signed the contract for the May 2 bout at Las Vegas' MGM Grand, there was a real Super Bowl, No. 49, in Glendale, Arizona, a Phoenix suburb.

The New England Patriots-Seattle Seahawks game would "bring an estimated $500 million economic impact" to the Phoenix area, according to the Arizona Super Bowl Host Committee.

"Super Hype," said the critics, including an economics professor, Victor Matheson of Holy Cross, who estimated the impact at between $30 million and $130 million. Another estimate from PricewaterhouseCoopers, a national auditing firm, put the projected impact at $209 million.

From $500 million to $30 million with stops at $209 million and $130 million, there's a lot of room for skepticism. It's a cautionary tale and perhaps the only reliable way to judge any event tagged with Super Bowl-like expectations, including Mayweather-Pacquiao.

From Fremont Street to the Strip, hotels and casinos are expecting a boost in revenue. But real numbers are about as elusive as a jackpot at a slot machine. A lot of money is

bound to hit town yet it's hard to say how much or how it will be divided among the city's waiters, blackjack dealers, ticket-brokers and cabbies.

"Safe to say, this will be bigger than any fight ever in the city," said Pat Christenson, president of Las Vegas Events. "I can't remember a fight with the kind of buzz this one has."

Here's what we do know: The long-awaited welterweight confrontation is expected to generate more revenue than ever in boxing, breaking the widely-reported mark of $200 million generated by Mayweather-Canelo Alvarez in 2013.

The pay-per-view revenue from the Showtime telecast of Mayweather-Alvarez, also at the MGM Grand, was $150 million. The pay-per-view buy rate of 2.2 million fell short of the nearly 2.5 million for the HBO telecast of Mayweather's victory over Oscar De La Hoya in 2007. But the pay-per-view price tag for Mayweather-Canelo was $70, $15 more than the $55 for Mayweather-De La Hoya.

When Mayweather-Pacquiao was announced, the pay-per-view price for the HBO-Showtime production was expected to range from $90 to $100. The pay-per-view audience is expected to surpass the Mayweather-De La Hoya record. Online sportsbook Bovada opened with an over-under bet at 3.15 million. Three million buys at $100 a pop amounts to $300 million.

Then there's the live gate. Mayweather-Canelo set the Nevada record of $20 million, selling 16,146 seats for the event at about $1,240 per ticket. The ticket price sold by a broker averaged $2,887.69.

When Mayweather-Pacquiao was announced, it wasn't clear how the MGM would price the seats. But brokers were expected to purchase the lion's share. Then, expect a steep, steady escalation until opening bell. For Mayweather-Alvarez, a ringside seat on the secondary market went for $29,000.

Initial expectations put the average ticket price for Mayweather-Pacquiao at between $3,000 and $4,000. No telling what it will ultimately fetch on the secondary market, although according to one resale ticket aggregator – TiqIQ – the average ticket price in late February was $10,506.41. That was higher than the final average for the most recent Super Bowl, $10,466.11.

There are at least two other revenue streams: One from advertising and the second from international television rights. For Mayweather-Alvarez, that amounted to about $30 million.

It's unclear how the absence of a Mexican in the main event will affect the Mexican market on a day that coincides with their national holiday, Cinco de Mayo, although Mayweather has been selling to that demographic, boxing's most loyal customer base. Throughout the negotiations, he has insisted on the May 2 date, despite protestations from Pacquiao promoter Bob Arum, who argued a day in June was more appropriate.

Mayweather showed up in a courtside seat at an Indiana Pacers-Lakers game in early January at Staples Center in Los Angeles dressed as if he were about to apply for Mexican citizenship. His cap and jacket were done in green-white-and-red, Mexico's national colors.

According to Golden Boy Promotions, eight of 10 Mexico households tuned into Mayweather-Alvarez in a free telecast offered by Televisa, which bought the international rights from Showtime. Golden Boy spent $10 million in advertising the fight in Mexico. Without a Mexican in the May 2 main event, however, the telecast might not have the same value for Televisa, TV Azteca or Univision.

Nevertheless, the worldwide audience figures to be bigger than ever. The well-traveled Pacquiao ranks as an international celebrity. So let's say that the advertising and international rights stay at $30 million. And let's say there are 3 million pay-per-view buys in the U.S. for $300 million and a $25 million live gate. That's $355 million, $155 million more than the Mayweather-Alvarez record.

Ticket prices at the MGM Grand Garden Arena will be configured to smash the current live-gate record of $20 million.

AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES

It's a fortune, all right. Its impact will benefit, first, Mayweather and, second, Pacquiao. That's as it should be. There have been a lot of conflicting reports on exactly what they'll get, mostly because it's not known how much of the various revenue streams go into the total purse. We only know that Mayweather gets 60 percent and Pacquiao 40.

According to some reports, Mayweather will collect $150

million and Pacquiao $100 million. Other reports are less optimistic, putting Mayweather' check at $120 million and Pacquiao at $80 million. The real number rests in the pay-per-view buy rate and that won't be known until after the fight.

Whatever the fighters collect, it's safe to guess it'll be a career-high for each. Mayweather's highest was $75 million, give or take a million, for Alvarez. Pacquiao's biggest purse was $30 million for his third fight with Juan Manuel Marquez. No matter how you add it up, there will be plenty for a new Ferrari or three, taxes, a big wager and a political campaign.

When the bout was announced, it wasn't known how HBO and Showtime would divvy up the remaining spoils, which will potentially include some big money in replay rights.

Outside of the parties contracted to work the rich fight, the economic impact is a guess. But a boost in gambling revenue is a pretty good bet.

"Other than the Super Bowl, this could be the biggest wagering event we've ever had," said Jay Kornegay, the sportsbook director at Westgate-Las Vegas.

There's that Super Bowl angle again. According to estimates within the Nevada gaming industry, the total handle for the Patriots victory over the Seahawks was nearly $116 million. Nobody expects to get even close to that with Mayweather-Pacquiao.

The consensus is that the fight will attract at least $30 million in wagers through the city's casinos.

"We'll take a lot of big bets, seven figures, for this kind of fight," said Jay Rood, vice president of the MGM Race & Sports Book, who has taken exactly that kind of bet from Mayweather on football.

Boxing wagers have declined, especially on Mayweather's fights with his two predictable victories over Marcos Maidana in the third and fourth fights on a Showtime contract for six bouts.

Book operators estimate that the handle will be four to five times higher for Mayweather-Pacquiao than it was for the Mayweather-Maidana rematch.

Before the bout was announced, Mayweather, a Las Vegas resident, was about a 2½-1 favorite over the Filipino Congressman. Early bets

JACKPOT!

Many of Las Vegas' 124,270 hotel rooms will be occupied by passionate boxing fans during Mayweather-Pacquiao fight week.

JEFF BOTTARI/GETTY IMAGES

were small. The biggest reported was a $1,000 wager on Pacquiao with the William Hill Agency in the U.K. But the bet is that those wagers will multiply, four and five fold, as the opening bell approaches.

In large part, that's because the five to six years of on-and-off negotiations have already done all the advertising for Pacquiao promoter Arum and Mayweather adviser Al Haymon. Unlike the Mayweather-Canelo build-up, no international press tour was planned.

"This fight has had six years of hype," Arum said. "Why spend the money?"

A lot will be saved on private jets and pricey hotel accommodations in New York, Los Angeles, San Antonio and Mexico City. What's saved in those cities, however, might be spent in Las Vegas during the days before and on May 2. At least, that's the hope of every Vegas hotel between Mandalay Bay at one end of the Strip and The Golden Nugget in the funky Fremont District.

Minutes after Mayweather posted the signed contract on his Shots social-media account, there was a furious rush to reserve rooms. There was also a wild inflationary spiral in rates. A Saturday night room at the MGM is usually available at $190. Moments after news that the deal was done, the one-night rate for the same room on May 2 jumped to $705.

Across the busy intersection at the Excalibur, the Saturday rate for a Tower room went from $159 to $349. Across the street at New York-New York, it jumped from $175 to $425, Down the Strip at Circus Circus, it went from $99 to $199.

The rush for reservations apparently crashed some of the hotel websites, causing confusion about whether any rooms at all were available. According to an initial report, the MGM Grand had sold out. But that wasn't accurate. Some rooms could still be acquired by phone, according to an MGM representative. But the waiting for somebody to answer took an estimated 40 minutes, too long to listen to elevator music.

Las Vegas has 124,270 hotel rooms, including 62,000 up and down the Strip. Just the MGM has 6,800, second in the world only to The Venetian in Macau, the Chinese re-creation of Vegas. Over the last decade, it's not often that Vegas has been completely booked. But the furious rush for rooms on the night of Feb. 20 and the subsequent escalation of rates are sure signs that maybe – just maybe – the city will get close on May 2.

Bob Arum, who promoted Muhammad Ali, senses some unprecedented momentum for Mayweather-Pacquiao. He has compared it to Ali-Joe Frazier at Madison Garden in 1971, the last Fight of the Century. He's also said it could be bigger.

"Things were a lot different then," Arum said. "There was no pay-per-view. It was closed-circuit in a theater. There was no social media to promote Ali or George Foreman.

"To me, Manny and Floyd will be like a Super Bowl. It's not just a fight. It's a huge event. The world is going to come to Vegas for this."

The rooms might be filled mostly with people who can't afford a ticket. If the recent history of significant fights is an indication, the telecast will be shown at various places up and down The Strip, all at a premium price that could be higher than buying the pay-per-view at home.

Hotels, the pay-per-view telecast in a ballroom, food and cab fare are all part of what economists and Chamber of Commerce types call "non-gaming revenue." It's hard to calculate and harder to predict.

Before negotiations fell apart in 2010, it looked as if the fight would happen sometime that year. Then, the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority projected the city would enjoy a $13 million impact in non-gaming revenue. That was $1.2 million less than the reported non-gaming impact, $14.2 million, from the Arizona-BYU game in the 2008 Las Vegas Bowl.

In 2015? More than five years later? Nobody is saying much.

But the silence is beginning to sound golden.

IN THE SIGHTS

The Floyd Mayweather Jr.-Manny Pacquiao fight on May 2 is expected to break all pay-per-view and revenue records. Here are the current marks that are in danger.

- **$200 million in total revenue from Floyd Mayweather Jr.'s decision over Canelo Alvarez in 2013**
- **2.5 million pay-per-view buys for Mayweather's victory over Oscar De La Hoya in 2007**
- **$20 million live gate for Mayweather-Alvarez at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas**
- **$150 million pay-per-view revenue for Mayweather-Alvarez**

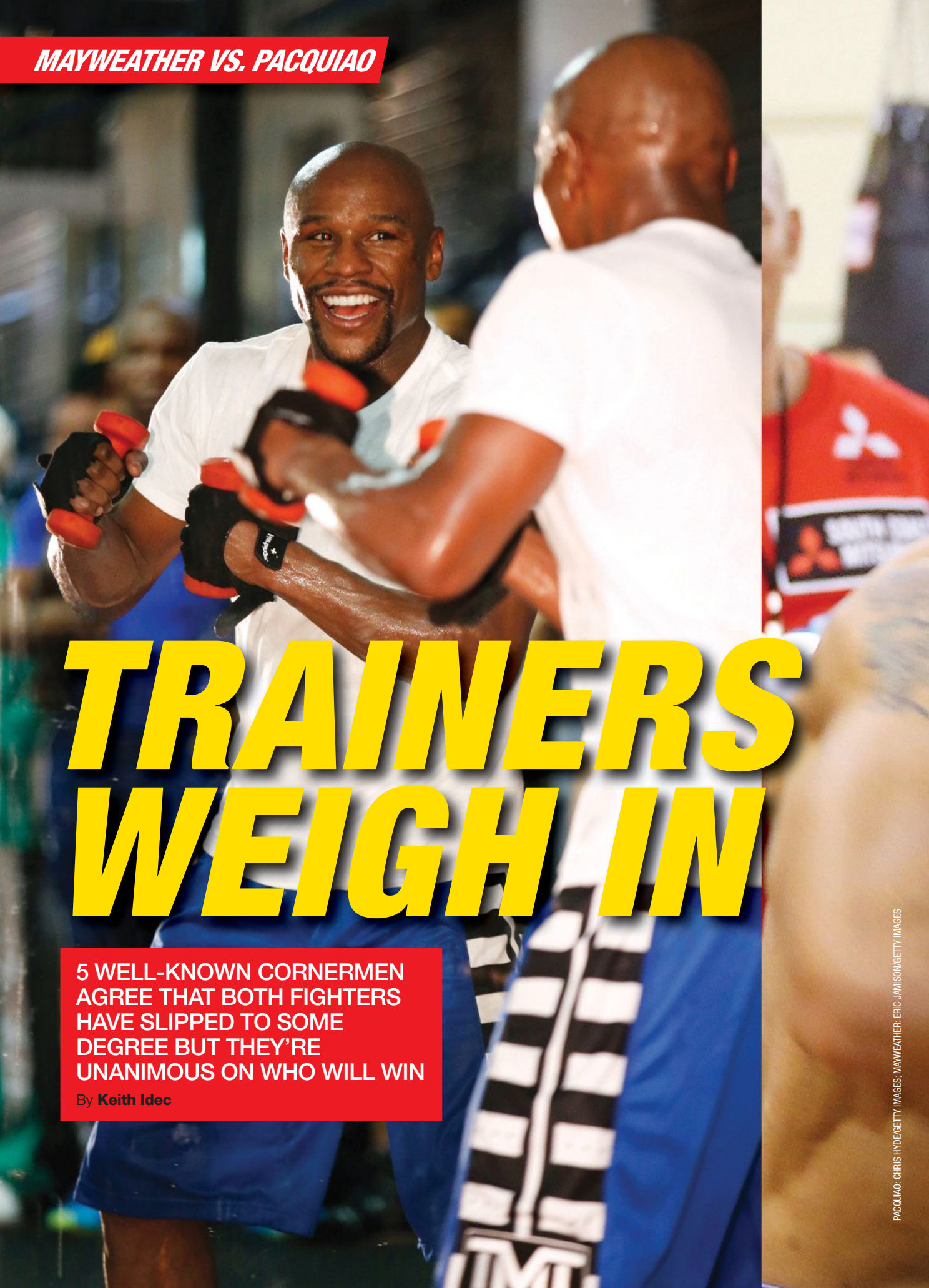
AT RINGTV.COM

HATTON'S TAKE
Fighters' common foe breaks down fight.
bit.ly/ricky-hatton

FOR HIS PEOPLE
Pacquiao dedicates fight to Filipinos.
bit.ly/pacquiao-philippines

TV EXECS' THOUGHTS
HBO and Showtime officials are thrilled.
bit.ly/hbo-showtime

MERCHANT'S QUESTION
Will the fight live up to the hype?
bit.ly/larry-merchant



TRAINERS WEIGH IN

5 WELL-KNOWN CORNERMEN AGREE THAT BOTH FIGHTERS HAVE SLIPPED TO SOME DEGREE BUT THEY'RE UNANIMOUS ON WHO WILL WIN

By **Keith Idec**

PACQUIAO: CHRIS HYDE/GETTY IMAGES; MAYWEATHER: ERIC JAMISON/GETTY IMAGES

Manny Pacquiao faces an uphill battle against Floyd Mayweather Jr., according to five notable trainers.

No one knows what goes on inside the ring more than trainers, particularly those who have enjoyed great success.

That's why THE RING asked five of boxing's top mentors to assess the skills of 38-year-old Floyd Mayweather Jr. and 36-year-old Manny Pacquiao going into their May 2 superfight in Las Vegas.

Each believes both boxers have shown signs of slippage in recent bouts, though to varying degrees, and aren't the fighters they were in their physical primes. Those trainers also offered their predictions.

★

JOEL DIAZ

HAS TRAINED: Tim Bradley, Julio Diaz, Omar Figueroa, Abner Mares

ON MAYWEATHER: When I saw Mayweather fight Maidana in the first and second fights, I just thought age is becoming a factor. He's not as explosive as he was a few years ago, like when he fought (Shane) Mosley, when he fought Oscar (De La Hoya). He's more defensive and he holds back a lot. I think it's always been because of his hands. And now he's getting older. His reactions are not the same and his reflexes are not the same. But he has always taken care of himself and he has not been in many wars so he's still in a good position.

ON PACQUIAO: I've noticed he doesn't have that fire in him anymore, that fire he had years ago. When [Bradley] fought him the first time (in June 2012), he was very explosive. When we fought him the second time (in April 2014), even Bradley told me he wasn't the same as the first time. Tim told me, 'Coach, if I didn't have injuries I would've beaten him.' He wasn't that vicious fighter that he was two, three years ago. Back then, he was

in attack mode. When he hurt you, he'd finish you. He's not the same fighter anymore. And at his age, every training camp takes a lot out of your body. Manny Pacquiao has over 60 fights (64). It's fights, plus camps, plus training, plus running and his body is already feeling it.

MAY 2: I lean more toward Mayweather. Mayweather is a more defensive fighter and he's very slick. Pacquiao is strong and fast on offense but he gets reckless. When he throws punches, he exposes himself a lot. That's when Mayweather will catch you. That's what he likes to do. I think that Mayweather will beat Manny Pacquiao. It'll be hard for him to knock him out because I know Mayweather has issues with his hands and Pacquiao can take punches. The time he got knocked out by Marquez, that punch landed at the right time and the right place. I think it'll be a decision.

★

JOE GOOSSEN

HAS TRAINED: Diego Corrales, Terry Norris, Michael Nunn, Gabriel Ruelas, Rafael Ruelas

ON MAYWEATHER: From 140 on down, he was vicious. He could punch and hurt people. He was a much more explosive fighter then. Now he's a much more crafty, Bernard Hopkins-esque type of fighter. When you think about the Mayweather who fought Chico Corrales, do you remember those step-in hooks and blazing-fast combos? When he got going, that assault was just vicious. He punched so much more. This is a different Mayweather. He's a seasoned veteran who picks his opportunities much more judiciously than he did when he was younger, when he was at junior welterweight, lightweight and junior lightweight.

HOW DO YOU BET AGAINST MAYWEATHER? WHEN DID THAT START? HAS ANYONE EVER WON A BET AGAINST MAYWEATHER? NO.
– JOE GOOSSEN

ON PACQUIAO: Pacquiao had a good outing against Algieri, had him down half a dozen times. Then again, Algieri, compared to the elite, top-notch guys, he's not there. But I'm sure Pacquiao still has a lot of pop left in his left hand and his right hook. He's still got good legs, he's still got good bounce. He's still got speed. He's still got awkwardness to him, he's left-handed and he's been at the top of the game for years and years. Those are all things in his favor.

MAY 2: I favor Mayweather in the fight. I don't think he'd knock out Pacquiao because he doesn't knock people out anymore. But how do you bet against Mayweather? When did that start? Has anyone ever won a bet against Mayweather? No. There's certain guys you don't bet against, unless they show you it's reasonable to bet against them. And it's just not reasonable to bet against Mayweather.

★

JOHN DAVID JACKSON

HAS TRAINED: Nate Campbell, Bernard Hopkins, Sergey Kovalev, Shane Mosley

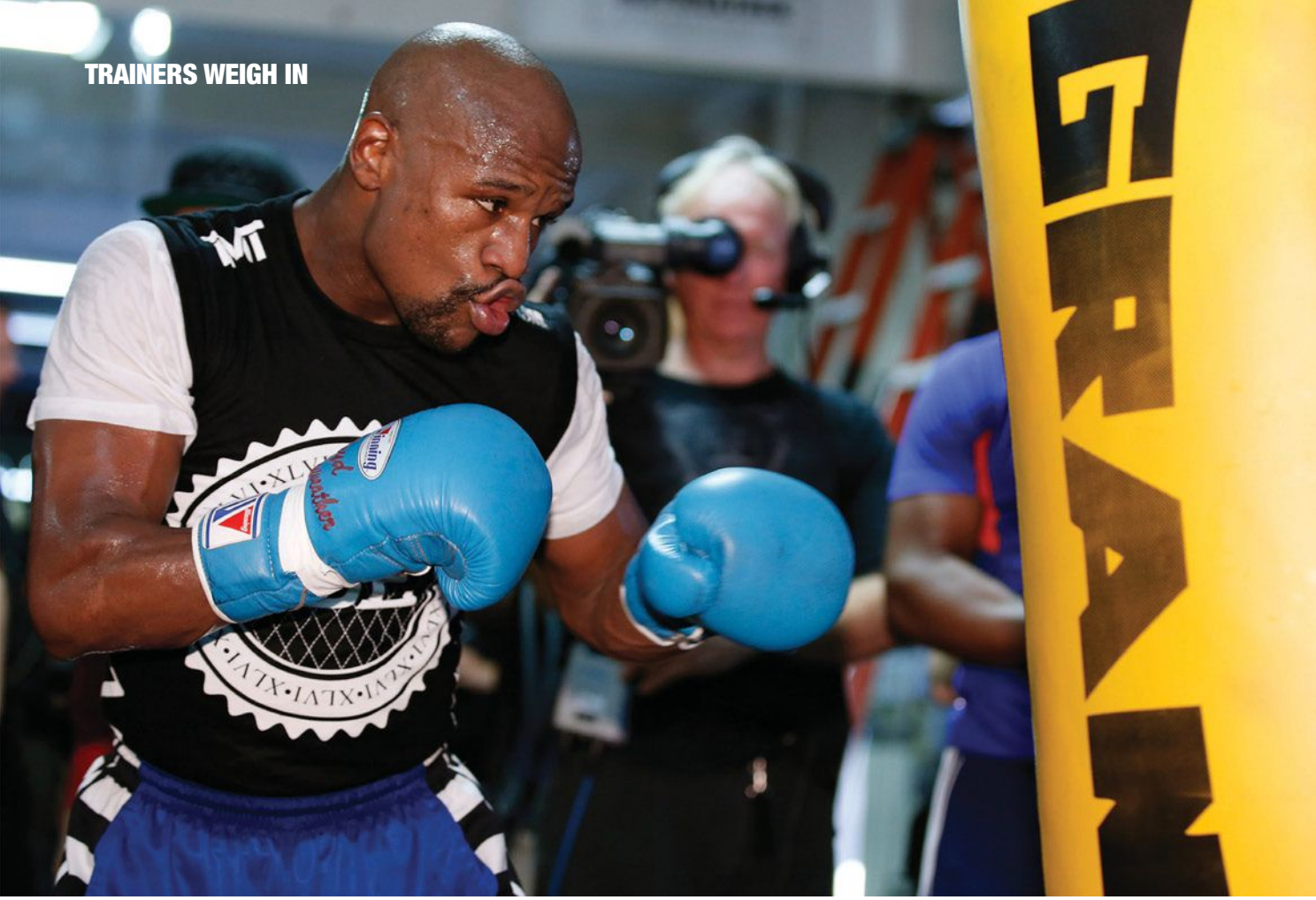
ON MAYWEATHER: Age does catch up with you and there are things he doesn't do as well as he once did. Defensively, he's not as good as he once was. He's prone to get hit more than he once was and that may catch up with him. But he's a very good fighter. I can't take nothing away from him. Great? Not at welterweight. Junior lightweight, I think that's when he was at his best. That's when he was at the top of his game. But at welterweight? No. There were plenty of guys throughout history that were better fighters, that were hungrier, had better power and better boxing skill, and that would've beaten him.

ON PACQUIAO: The knockout against Marquez hurt him a little bit. He's slipping. Right now, he's all offense. His defense is terrible. He's getting hit with shots. I don't see any improvement. But they've brought him back the way they should've brought him back, to deceive the public into thinking he has come back as strong as he was before. He really hasn't done that because he hasn't fought a killer since he got knocked out by Marquez. I understand what they're doing so I can't knock that. But is he improving? No. Actually, I see him going backwards. He's off-balance a lot when he punches. He's never square. He never sets up his shots. He throws a lot of good shots; don't get me wrong. But technically he's not sound at all. He does a lot of things terrible. But he has a good enough punch to cover up some of that. Plus, with the opponents they're picking for him, it makes it easy for him to look good even if he's not doing things correctly.

MAY 2: I'm picking Floyd. He's a better boxer, he's a smarter fighter. Manny is a very good offensive fighter. Defensively, he's lacking a whole lot. That will be a major factor in the fight. Floyd is too evasive for him and he still has defensive ability. So he will make Manny miss a lot and he probably will counter him to death. I think

PACQUIAO: CHRIS HYDE/GETTY IMAGES; MAYWEATHER: ERIC JAMISON/GETTY IMAGES

John David Jackson was highly critical of both fighters at this stage of their careers.



Ronnie Shields believes Mayweather's superior skills will be the difference in the fight.

Floyd carries enough power at 147 to stop Manny. He might cut him up. He might hurt him.

★

ABEL SANCHEZ

HAS TRAINED: Carlos Baldomir, Gennady Golovkin, Miguel Angel Gonzalez, Terry Norris, Samuel Peter

ON MAYWEATHER: He has slowed down. He's not the fighter he was five years ago. The Maidana fights took some things out of him but he's still a very smart fighter, he's still a very accurate puncher. If he picks a spot to hit, he's going to hit it. He gets hit a little more because he's a little more stationary. But against Manny, Manny's going to be the one doing the running. He'll be jumping in and out so Floyd doesn't have to work that hard, other than making sure he punches between punches, when Manny's moving in.

ON PACQUIAO: I have a different take on the Marquez knockout. That knockout was probably the best thing that could've happened at that particular time in his career. He was getting a little complacent. I thought with all the nightlife and the basketball and the girls, the things he was doing because of fame, the knockout refocused him. It showed him that it could happen to anybody. It was just a fluke shot. I thought he was going to knock out Marquez soon after that. But the knockout made him realize maybe he wasn't doing things the way they needed to be done. He became a pupil again for Freddie (Roach), instead of just going through the motions. He's a little cautious now but he was cautious two or three fights before the Marquez fight. He got a little crazy before the Marquez knockout. He got a little wild. He was not afraid of getting hit and not afraid of making mistakes. After that knockout, it seemed like he settled down and Freddie got his student back.

MAY 2: Floyd has slowed down a little bit but not enough to lose to Manny. I felt Mayweather would've beat him easily five years ago. Today it's a better fight, a closer fight. But Mayweather is too smart for Manny. Manny throws a lot of punches but he leaves himself wide open and he's off-balance a lot. Mayweather's got the skills and the smarts to punch holes through Manny's defense and Manny's aggressiveness. Floyd will win a close decision.

★

RONNIE SHIELDS

HAS TRAINED: Juan Diaz, Vernon Forrest, Evander Holyfield, Erislandy Lara, Pernell Whitaker

ON MAYWEATHER: I don't think a whole lot has changed for him. He counterpunches and does what he has to do to win the fight. Floyd's one of these guys who's going to roll, he's going to take it and he's going to beat you to the punch in return. But in the first Maidana fight, Maidana put Floyd on a pace he wasn't used to and hadn't seen for a very long time. He had difficulty dealing with that and the rough tactics Maidana used. The problem was Maidana couldn't keep that pace for 12 rounds. In the later rounds, he slowed down. Floyd is always in great shape so he took advantage of it and counterpunched his way to a decision. The second fight that they fought, Maidana came out trying to box him, which was probably the craziest choice I've ever seen in the sport, when he had so much success doing what he did the first time. You're not going to sit outside and out-box Floyd Mayweather. It's as simple as that. Floyd has shown it doesn't matter how old he is. If you don't make him do anything, he's going to beat you to the punch every time. It's happened over and over and over.

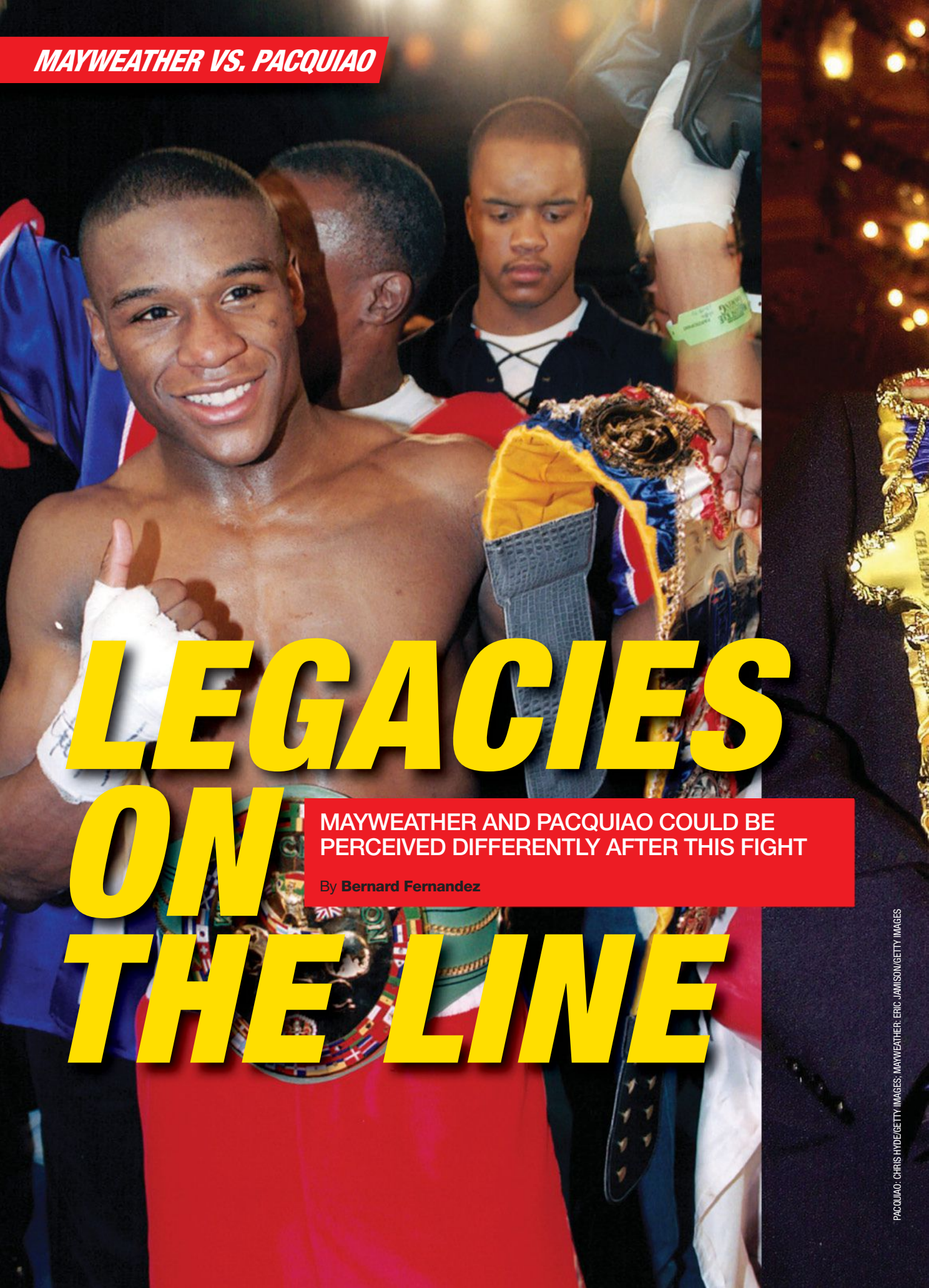
ON PACQUIAO: When Pacquiao came back from Marquez, against Brandon Rios, he didn't look like the same guy. He's still a good fighter, he's throwing a lot of punches. But the power is gone. He has no more power. His power was there before but sometimes as you get older you have a tendency to lose something. I don't think Manny has lost much of his speed but I think he has lost some of his power. Four or five years ago, he would've knocked Brandon Rios out. Although Brandon takes a good punch, Manny had some opportunities he didn't take advantage of.

MAY 2: It will be a very close fight but at the same time Floyd has the mental toughness to pull it out. Floyd is one of these guys that you have to beat mentally to win. Nobody's done that so far. Manny has a strong will also but it's going to take more than will. It's going to take a lot of skill, and as far as skills are concerned, I have to give the edge to Floyd because he's been up there so many years and doesn't have a defeat yet. RING

Keith Idec covers boxing for The Record, of Woodland Park, N.J. He can be reached on Twitter @Idecboxing.

'I FELT MAYWEATHER WOULD'VE BEAT HIM EASILY FIVE YEARS AGO. TODAY IT'S A BETTER FIGHT, A CLOSER FIGHT.'
– ABEL SANCHEZ

PACQUIAO: CHRIS HYDE/GETTY IMAGES; MAYWEATHER: ERIC JAMISON/GETTY IMAGES



LEGACIES ON THE LINE

MAYWEATHER AND PACQUIAO COULD BE PERCEIVED DIFFERENTLY AFTER THIS FIGHT

By **Bernard Fernandez**

PACQUIAO: CHRIS HYDE/GETTY IMAGES; MAYWEATHER: ERIC JAMISON/GETTY IMAGES

Floyd Mayweather Jr. (previous page) and Manny Pacquiao began to make their marks long ago.

A "legacy" is something that most fighters aren't accomplished enough to carry with them into the post-boxing portion of their lives and beyond. Those who can lay claim to having actually crafted a legacy usually range from very good to indisputably great, or at least indisputably famous. Everyone else is, well, just sort of passing through.

For more than five years, Floyd Mayweather Jr. and Manny Pacquiao – who would be first-ballot inductees into the International Boxing Hall of Fame even were they to retire now – have been separated by an imaginary fence of their own creation, denying themselves and the public a definitive answer to the question so many have asked during what seemingly was destined to go down as the fight game's longest-running and most infuriating tease: Who would win if they fought?

Now, having reached an agreement on a May 2 unification showdown at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas, Mayweather (47-0, 26 knockouts), THE RING/WBC/WBA champion, and Pacquiao (57-5-2, 38 KOs), the WBO titlist, we'll get the answer to that question.

Both fighters will receive career-best purses – Mayweather's could soar as high as $150 million if the most optimistic pay-per-view projections are met – but only one will come away with a legacy that is just a bit more pristine than it might otherwise have been. The superbout is scheduled for 12 rounds; the proposals and counterproposals that led up to the signing of contracts were stretched out over a considerably longer period of time.

Asked if negotiations for Mayweather-Pacquiao were the toughest he'd ever been involved in, Top Rank CEO Bob Arum, Pacquiao's promoter, said, "Substantively, I would say no. Substantively, there's been very little [in dispute]. The essential points were agreed to right away. The real problem is, you can't do a fight if one fighter is reluctant to do the fight."

That was a none-too-subtle dig at Mayweather, his seldom-glimpsed-but-highly-influential adviser, Al Haymon, or both. For a long time, the failure of

"Money" and "PacMan" to arrive at a mutually satisfactory accord has been the subject of intense conjecture and debate. If you're a Mayweather acolyte, the foremost obstacle was Pacquiao's refusal to agree to blood-testing because of his fear of needles (Pacquiao's assertion) or because he was on performance-enhancing drugs (Mayweather's). Pacquiao backers invariably countered with the charge that Mayweather was "scared" of the Fab Filipino and would concoct any excuse to avoid having his undefeated record possibly besmirched by the most dangerous opponent he would ever face.

But a thaw in the big freeze between arguably the two finest boxers of their generation began when the premium-cable entities backing each man –Showtime for the 38-year-old Mayweather, HBO for the 36-year-old Pacquiao – agreed they would work together to televise the fight. It marked the first time Showtime and HBO had cooperated on such an arrangement since heavyweight champion Lennox Lewis, an HBO client, faced Showtime-backed Mike Tyson on June 8, 2002. That in and of itself might have been as much of a stunner as Mayweather and Pacquiao meeting at a Miami Heat basketball game and deciding it finally was time to make nice.

"Today you are seeing on social media conversations that took place privately on the phone back then, when my husband, Dan, and (Don) King and Arum hated each other's guts," said Kathy Duva, president of Main Events and the widow of the company founder. "It's just that most people weren't aware of how deep it went. But I was living through it.

"During that Lewis-Tyson promotion, they had to have a weekly conference call with all the lawyers that were involved, representing all the various entities just to hash out the legal issues. The calls would last two or three hours every Tuesday. You had lawyers literally arguing over who would bring the stool into the ring. I mean, crazy stuff. The Tyson and Lewis camps were trying to screw each other in so many ways, I can't even begin to count them all."

The same scenario might have been played out again for Mayweather-Pacquiao but back-to-back losses by Pacquiao in 2012 – a disputed split-decision to Timothy Bradley and a one-punch knockout against Juan Manuel Marquez – weakened his bargaining position

MAYWEATHER: AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES; PACQUIAO: JED JACOBSOHN/ALLSPORT

PARALLEL COURSES »

1995 ★ PACQUIAO Makes pro debut as a 16-year-old junior flyweight, outpointing Edmund Ignacio in a four-round bout

1996 ★ MAYWEATHER Wins bronze medal in 1996 Olympics in Atlanta. Later makes pro debut, stopping Roberto Apodaca in two rounds in Las Vegas

PACQUIAO Stopped in three rounds by Rustico Torrecampo, his first loss.

2001 ★ MAYWEATHER Faces what is perceived to be a major challenge against then-unbeaten Diego Corrales but wins easily, finishing Corrales off in 10 rounds.

PACQUIAO Knocks out Lehlo Ledwaba in the eighth round to win the IBF junior featherweight title in Las Vegas, his breakthrough victory in the U.S.

2002 ★ MAYWEATHER Wins second world title in arguably his toughest fight, a unanimous decision that many believe should've gone to the loser, then-WBC lightweight champ Jose Luis Castillo. Mayweather wins the rematch eight months later.

and Arum had to know it. So the Pacquiao camp acceded to all the previously stated demands by Team Mayweather, including a 60-40 split of the financial pot, having Floyd's name placed first on all promotional materials and his being introduced last on fight night. All that remained was for Mayweather – who had previously denounced Pacquiao as "that little yellow chump" and whose animosity toward Arum, his former promoter, is well-known – to sign on the dotted line.

A breakthrough seemed to happen on Jan. 27, when the would-be combatants finally met in person at the Miami Heat-Milwaukee Bucks game in Miami. Pleasantries and telephone numbers were exchanged and it seemed certain a deal would officially be struck before Feb. 1, which Pacquiao had said was the

CAREER VS. CAREER

Comparing the legacies of Floyd Mayweather Jr. and Manny Pacquiao (including record against those who have held a major title and either current or potential Hall of Famers).

CATEGORY	MAYWEATHER	PACQUIAO
Active	1996-present	1995-present
Record	47-0 (26 KOs)	57-5-2 (38 KOs)
Record in title fights	24-0 (10 KOs)	18-2-2 (11 KOs)
Record vs. titleholders	22-0 (7 KOs)	20-4-2 (10 KOs)
Record vs. Hall of Famers	10-0 (4 KOs)	11-3-1 (6 KOs)
Major titles	14	10
Divisions with titles	5	8

Notes: Pacquiao fought Marco Antonio Barrera and Ricky Hatton for the RING title. Current Hall of Famers or those considered potential inductees are as follows. Mayweather – Miguel Cotto, Shane Mosley, Juan Manuel Marquez, Ricky Hatton, Oscar De La Hoya, Arturo Gatti, Diego Corrales, Jose Luis Castillo (twice) and Genaro Hernandez. Pacquiao – Marquez (four times), Mosley, Cotto, Hatton, De La Hoya, Marco Antonio Barrera (twice), Erik Morales (three times) and Tim Bradley (twice). It is too early to make a projection on Canelo Alvarez.

1998 ★ MAYWEATHER Wins first world title by stopping WBC junior lightweight champ Genaro Hernandez in eight rounds. Selected THE RING Fighter of the Year for the first of two times. He also received the honor in 2007.

PACQUIAO Wins first world title by stopping WBC flyweight champ Chatchai Sasakul in eight rounds in Thailand.

1999 ★ MAYWEATHER Appears alone on THE RING Magazine cover for the first time, in the April issue.

PACQUIAO Loses second fight, a third-round KO against Medgoen Singsurat in Thailand that costs him his WBC flyweight title.

2003 ★ PACQUIAO Stops Marco Antonio Barrera in 11 rounds to win THE RING featherweight title in first fight of his series against Mexico's Big Three – Barrera, Juan Manuel Marquez and Erik Morales.

2005 ★ MAYWEATHER Wins a title in a third division by stopping overmatched WBC junior welterweight champ Arturo Gatti in six rounds.

PACQUIAO Loses a decision to Erik Morales, his last defeat until his controversial setback against Tim Bradley in 2012.

2006 ★ MAYWEATHER Easily outpoints Zab Judah in another fight that was deemed a significant test beforehand. A riot ensues during the fight.

PACQUIAO Defeats Erik Morales twice and Oscar Larios to win his first RING Fighter of the Year award. He also won it in 2008 and 2009.

2007 ★ MAYWEATHER Defeats Oscar De La Hoya by a split decision to win the WBC junior middleweight title in a passing-of-the-torch fight. Stops then-unbeaten Ricky Hatton in 10 rounds seven months later for the RING welterweight championship.

PACQUIAO Appears alone on the cover of THE RING Magazine for the first time, in the March issue, raising the question: "Best in the World?"

2011 ★ MAYWEATHER Knocks out Victor Ortiz with a left-right combination when Ortiz is looking at the referee after he fouled Mayweather.

2012 ★ MAYWEATHER Spends two months in jail for domestic violence. Later receives a more significant challenge than expected from Miguel Cotto but wins a one-sided decision.

PACQUIAO Back-to-back losses to Tim Bradley and Juan Manuel Marquez, the latter by a shocking knockout, raise questions about Pacquiao's future as an elite fighter.

2013 ★ MAYWEATHER Easily outpoints Canelo Alvarez in a fight that draws nearly 2.5 million pay-per-view buys, generating a record pay-per-view gross of $150 million.

drop-dead date before he'd look elsewhere for his next opponent. But that deadline came and went, along with a couple of others, again raising doubts as to whether Mayweather truly was serious about making good on the hints he was dropping that an agreement was imminent.

Among the skeptics were former middleweight and light heavyweight champion Bernard "The Alien" Hopkins and Seth Abraham, the former president of HBO Sports, each of whom has had dealings with Mayweather.

"If you're the best pound-for-pound fighter in the world, you have to take the lead," Hopkins said of the responsibility he believes Mayweather carries. "You have to *demand* fights like that. You got to show the people who are paying to see you on pay-per-view that you're serious about giving them what they want. And it's not just a money issue; legacy is important, as it should be. Not that any fighter can satisfy everyone but you don't want your legacy to be tarnished. And it can be if you make the wrong decisions. It's not even about winning or losing but about taking chances. You got to put yourself on the line if you want to separate yourself from everybody else.

"Would the legacies of these guys be tarnished if the fight doesn't happen? Not for both of them. One legacy will be analyzed and talked about and it won't be in a good way. That would be Floyd Mayweather's. It's no secret that most people believe that Floyd has everything it takes to out-box and out-slick Pacquiao. But most people were beginning to lose interest in seeing that fight happen. There's been too much foreplay, too much talk and not enough real movement. How long have people been saying that Mayweather-Pacquiao would be the Super Bowl of boxing? But the Super Bowl hasn't got played yet. There's only so many times the air can get let out of the balloon until there isn't any left."

Abraham, who spoke to THE RING before the fight was confirmed, was even more succinct in opinion as to the primary hangup.

"I do not believe this fight will take place, now or ever," Abraham opined. "I think Floyd is just having fun messing with everybody. Could the fight happen? Of course it could happen. I've been wrong many times before. But if I were at HBO, I'd be thinking about what fights could be made for Pacquiao as he heads off into the sunset.

ORTIZ: JOHN GURZINSKI/AFP/GETTY IMAGES; MANUEL MARQUEZ: AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES; HATTON/MARQUEZ: GABRIEL BOUYS/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

2008 ★ PACQUIAO Stops Oscar De La Hoya in eight rounds, a stunning upset that establishes him as a star.

2009 ★ MAYWEATHER Returns from a 21-month "retirement" to easily outpoint Juan Manuel Marquez. On-and-off negotiations to fight Pacquiao begin this year.

PACQUIAO Knocks out Ricky Hatton with an enormous left in the second round, perhaps his most spectacular victory.

2010 ★ PACQUIAO He and Mayweather are unable to reach a deal to fight one another in part because Pacquiao refuses Olympic-style drug testing. Tops WBC junior middleweight champ Antonio Margarito, giving him a title in an eighth weight class.

PACQUIAO Nearly shuts out Brandon Rios to record his first victory since 2011.

2014 ★ MAYWEATHER Marcos Maidana gives him some trouble but ultimately loses a clear decision. The fighters meet again four months later, with the same result. That was Mayweather's most recent fight. Talk of a fight with Pacquiao resumes late in the year.

PACQUIAO Outpoints Tim Bradley in their rematch to regain the WBO welterweight title and re-establish his superstar credentials. He later puts Chris Algieri down six times in an easy victory in his most recent fight.

2015 ★ PACQUIAO Announces in January that he has accepted terms to fight Mayweather. **MAYWEATHER** Announces on the social media platform Shots that he will fight Pacquiao on May 2 in Las Vegas.

"Floyd said to me once, when I was at [Madison Square Garden] that he believes he is one of the five greatest fighters of all time in any weight class. He believes that if he retires undefeated, he forever will be in that conversation.

"Clearly, Pacquiao is a risk. I don't think Floyd wants to put his zero at risk. He has the idea that if he retires with that zero, he instantly becomes part of the all-time-best discussion. I tried to dissuade him. I said if he fought Manny and won, he would be in that discussion, and if he didn't fight him, he might not be. He wasn't buying any of it.

"I said this to Floyd – and boy, did it anger Bob Arum – that Pacquiao would be a relatively easy fight for him. Styles make fights. Manny Pacquiao is tailor-made for the skills of Floyd Mayweather. He comes at you straight, he comes at you aggressively. I really don't think it's a difficult fight for Floyd."

Mayweather must not think so either, which makes his past reluctance to find a way to Pacquiao so perplexing. Prior to his May 1, 2010, bout with Shane Mosley, he pronounced himself all but invincible.

"No one has a chance to beat me," he said. "I'm not saying nobody else is good but I know how to win. That's what I do. I win. I always win. I can adapt and adjust to any fighter, any style. I'm the best that ever lived, hands down. No one can get me to say Sugar Ray Robinson or anybody else was or is better than me. No one was better. No one is better. Maybe no one ever will be better."

Sugar Ray Leonard, who knows a thing or two about big fights – his Sept. 16, 1981, fight with Thomas Hearns was at least as widely anticipated as Mayweather-Pacquiao – can relate to that kind of supreme confidence.

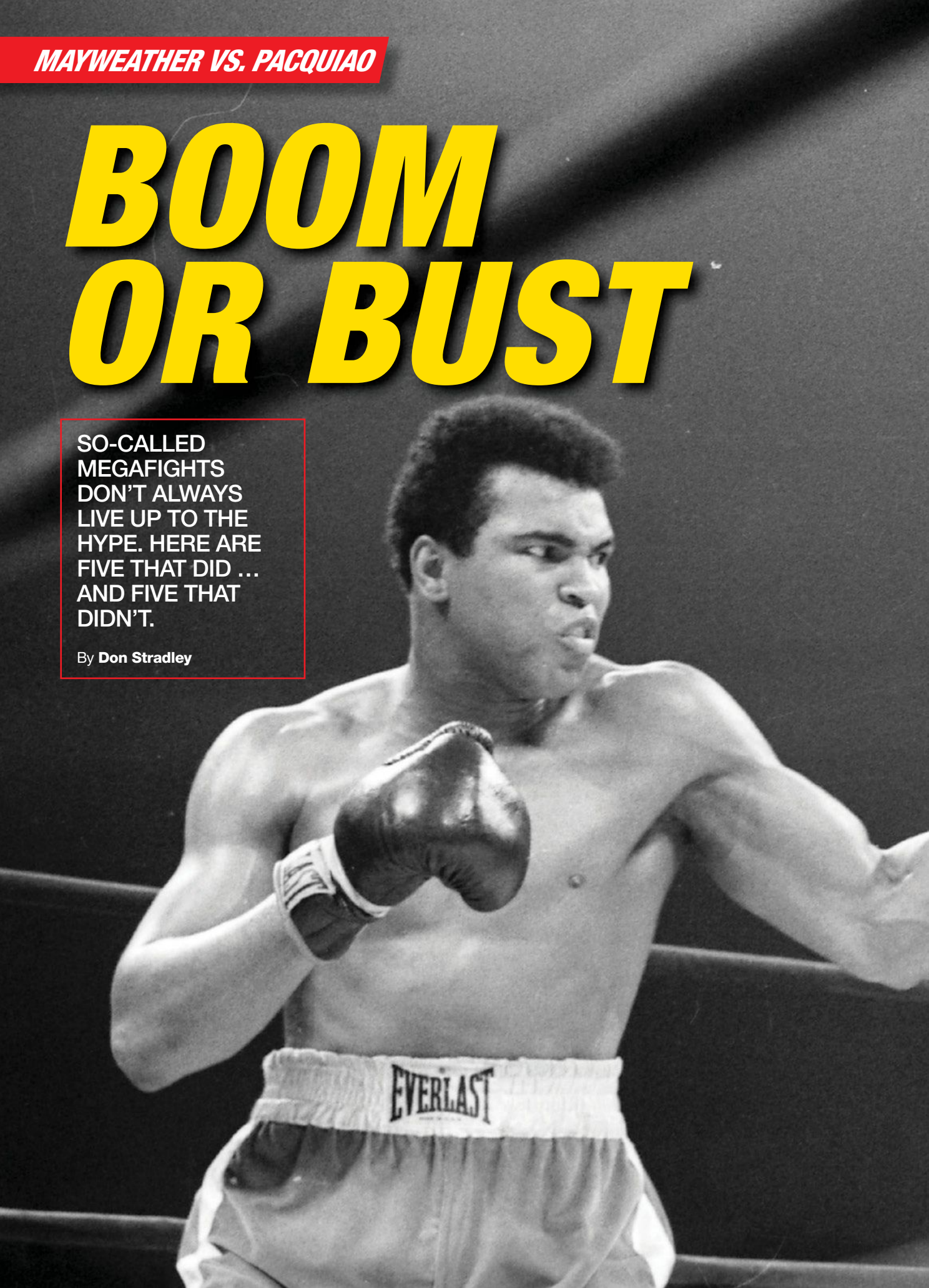
"Floyd is borderline arrogant," Leonard said. "I was the same way and I backed it up. You're supposed to believe that you're the best. You're supposed to believe you can beat anybody and everybody. You can't be that kind of champion if you don't believe that."

The thing is, Pacquiao – whose public demeanor is a bit more subdued than Mayweather's – believes in himself to the same exalted degree. Come May 2, someone will have to back it up with action. It's been a long time coming but just maybe the wait will prove to be worth it.

BOOM OR BUST

SO-CALLED MEGAFIGHTS DON'T ALWAYS LIVE UP TO THE HYPE. HERE ARE FIVE THAT DID … AND FIVE THAT DIDN'T.

By **Don Stradley**



Megafights create a lot of interest but the sad truth is that they don't always deliver mega-action. This can be traced back to perhaps the very first megafight of the gloved era, when a listless John L. Sullivan flopped against James J. Corbett in 1892. Ever since that disappointing night in New Orleans, megafights have veered from the dramatic to the abysmal and back again. Here are five that lived up their advance billing … and five that didn't.

BOOM

JOE FRAZIER VS. MUHAMMAD ALI

Date: March 8, 1971
Location: Madison Square Garden, New York
Result: Frazier UD 15
Summary: For most Baby Boomers, this is where megafights begin and end. The larger-than-life Ali had returned to boxing after a three-year absence and, despite being stripped of the heavyweight title for refusing the military draft, was still undefeated and considered by many to be the rightful heavyweight champion. Frazier, also undefeated, had earned championship recognition during Ali's exile. The build-up was so intense that it seemed the entire world was watching. After 15 rounds, Frazier was still champion, while Ali, battered but unbowed, was becoming a legend. »

Muhammad Ali-Joe Frazier I lived up to its moniker: Fight of the Century.

ROBERTO DURAN VS. SUGAR RAY LEONARD

Date: June 20, 1980
Location: Olympic Stadium, Montreal
Result: Duran UD 15
Summary: Duran was the fight fan's fighter, dominating the lightweight division for years. Leonard was an Olympic gold medalist and a shining favorite of the media. The two collided for Leonard's WBC welterweight belt and, in a surprising turn of events, Duran lured the younger, larger Leonard into a slugfest. Having never encountered an animal of Duran's ilk, Leonard lost a 15-round war on points. Duran's victory brought him briefly to the sport's peak but he learned that such brilliance is hard to repeat.

SUGAR RAY LEONARD VS. THOMAS HEARNS

Date: Sept. 16, 1981
Location: Caesars Palace, Las Vegas
Result: Leonard KO 14
Summary: After regaining the WBC title from Duran, Leonard's next challenge came in the form of gargantuan welterweight Tommy "Hitman" Hearns. With the WBA title belt around his own waist, Hearns provided Leonard with an opportunity to unify the two main welterweight titles of the day. After 12 rounds of see-saw action, it seemed as if Leonard's hope for a victory was slipping away. Desperate, Leonard won the 13th big, then stormed out for the 14th and knocked Hearns out of the ring. The "Hitman" regained his feet but Leonard poured dozens of punches into him until referee Davy Pearl stopped the bout at the 1:45 mark.

LARRY HOLMES VS. GERRY COONEY

Date: June 11, 1982
Location: Caesars Palace, Las Vegas
Result: Holmes KO 13
Summary: The most anticipated heavyweight title fight in years stirred up a lot of ugliness about whites vs. blacks, with WBC titlist Holmes growing bitter that his white opponent was receiving most of the bout's publicity. It reached a point where security for the bout included police snipers on the rooftops of every nearby venue to quell any potential riot. Once the bell rang, however, the contest was less about racial issues and more about a seasoned professional against a game but inexperienced prospect. The bout ended at 2:52 of the 13th, when Cooney's trainer, Victor Valle, signaled that his man had had enough.

The hype surrounding Larry Holmes-Gerry Cooney got ugly but the fight was compelling.

MARVELOUS MARVIN HAGLER VS. THOMAS HEARNS

Date: April 15, 1985
Location: Caesars Palace, Las Vegas
Result: Hagler KO 3
Summary: Immediately after losing to Leonard, Hearns sought another challenge to erase his embarrassing defeat. He wanted to fight middleweight champion Hagler, a decision that many believed was unwise. Hearns pulled out with an injury but the bout was made again three years later. It was worth the wait. Hagler, an occasionally prickly character who craved the stardom that had eluded him, waded into Hearns like a wild man. The two traded explosive punches until 1:52 of the third round. By then, Hearns was being carried to his corner and Hagler was a star at last.

HOLYFIELD/DOUGLAS: MIKE POWELL / ALLSPORT; HOLMES/COONEY: THE RING MAGAZINE

BUST

JACK DEMPSEY VS. GEORGES CARPENTIER

Date: July 2, 1921
Location: Boyle's Thirty Acres, Jersey City, N.J.
Result: Dempsey KO 4
Summary: Promoter Tex Rickard searched far and wide for a worthy opponent to meet heavyweight champion Dempsey. The result of Rickard's search was Georges Carpentier, a French war hero who looked as polished as a movie idol. Matching the war hero against alleged "war slacker" Dempsey created intense interest among fans, many of whom had lost loved ones in World War I. Carpentier's mystique was compounded by the news that he was practicing a "secret" punch in his training camp. The bout attracted a massive crowd of more than 80,000 and was boxing's first million-dollar gate but if Carpentier had a secret punch, he kept it to himself. He was stopped easily in what one reporter dubbed "a four-round waltz."

JOE LOUIS VS. BILLY CONN II

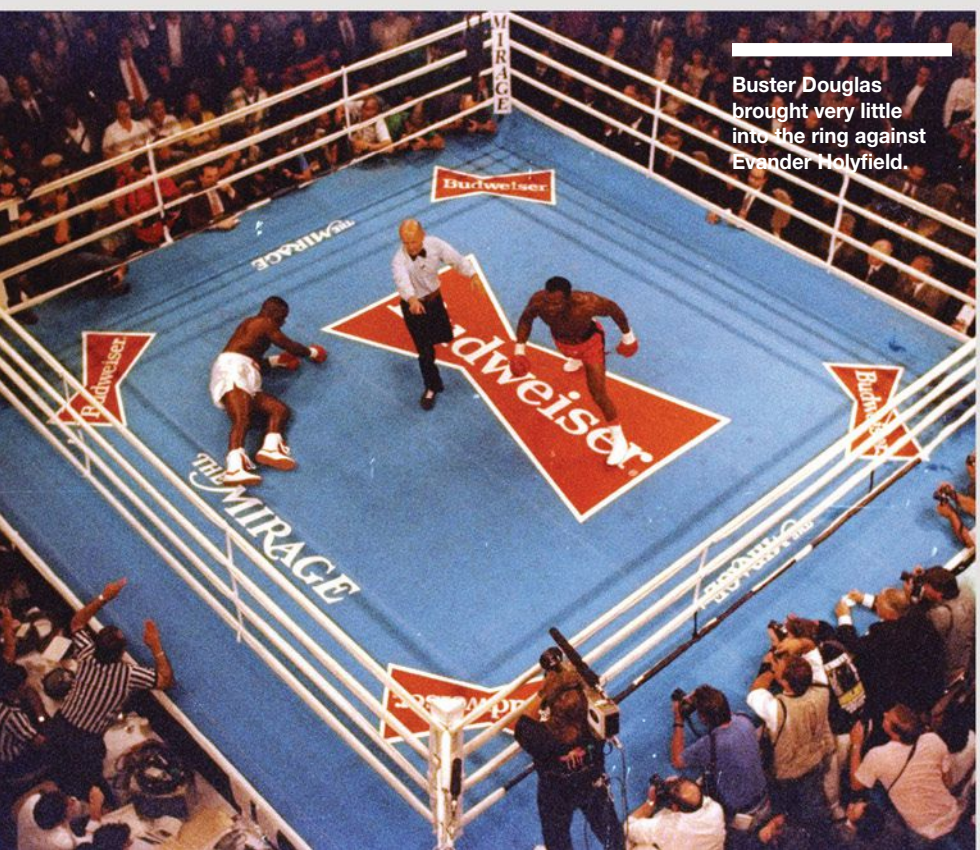
Date: June 19, 1946
Location: Yankee Stadium, New York
Result: Louis KO 8
Summary: Their first bout had been a thriller, won by Louis on a 13th-round KO. The rematch was expected to be another classic but something had happened since the first time Louis and Conn swapped punches, namely, World War II. They had spent time away from the ring to help America's war effort and Conn, especially, had suffered pronounced erosion to his skills and reflexes. Louis had retained enough of his old punch to score an eighth-round knockout but the bout was instantly forgettable.

MIKE TYSON VS. MICHAEL SPINKS

Date: June 27, 1988
Location: Convention Hall, Atlantic City, N.J.
Result: Tyson KO 1
Summary: The richest fight in history up to that time was also the biggest dud. Undefeated Tyson owned three alphabet belts while Spinks was the linear heavyweight champion, having won the belt by beating IBF titlist Larry Holmes. The bout smashed all records as far as grossing money was concerned, even topping the 1987 Super Bowl as the highest-grossing single day sporting event. The fight itself? It stunk. Spinks, who looked entirely psyched out as he stepped into the ring, wilted 91 seconds into the fight.

EVANDER HOLYFIELD VS. BUSTER DOUGLAS

Date: Oct. 25, 1990
Location: The Mirage, Las Vegas
Result: Holyfield KO 3
Summary: Douglas had shocked the world when he defeated Mike Tyson for the heavyweight championship earlier in the year but when he returned to the ring to defend the title against Holyfield he was overweight and under-motivated. Perhaps Douglas lost his incentive to train once he was guaranteed nearly $25 million, the largest purse ever paid to a fighter at the time. He was dropped in the third round, looking like a harpooned whale as he took the referee's count.



Buster Douglas brought very little into the ring against Evander Holyfield.

EVANDER HOLYFIELD VS. MIKE TYSON II

Date: June 28, 1997
Location: MGM Grand Garden Arena, Las Vegas
Result: Holyfield W DQ 3
Summary: We may look back at this bizarre bout with a kind of ironic fondness but at the time it was the biggest embarrassment in the history of the sport. The first bout between Holyfield and Tyson was a dramatic and unexpected knockout win for Holyfield. The rematch would have the entire boxing world glued to their TV sets. What we saw was a frustrated Tyson get himself disqualified for biting Holyfield's ears. Tyson was temporarily banned from fighting and mainstream sports fans had a new excuse to ridicule boxing.

HEAD TO HEAD: THE RING ANALYSIS

PACQUIAO: XAUME OLLEROS/AFP/GETTY IMAGES; MAYWEATHER: ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

RingTV.com Editor Doug Fischer believes Manny Pacquiao matches up well with Floyd Mayweather Jr.

FLOYD MAYWEATHER JR. IS FAVORED TO BEAT MANNY PACQUIAO ON MAY 2 BUT …

By **Doug Fischer**

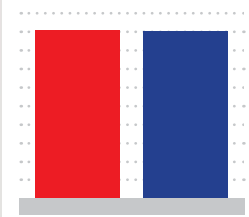
Manny Pacquiao has proven that the reports of his demise after his shocking one-punch knockout loss to Juan Manuel Marquez in December 2012 were premature. Since losing back-to-back bouts to Tim Bradley (by controversial split decision) and Marquez, Pacquiao has outclassed Brandon Rios, outpointed Bradley in their rematch and dominated Chris Algieri.

Pacquiao may not be the offensive dynamo he was during his peak years of 2008 and 2009 but the eight-division titleholder is still a force to be reckoned with. In fact, the 20-year veteran has exhibited the kind of patience and ring generalship in his recent victories that may trouble Mayweather, who struggled a bit in his two physical 12-round encounters with Marcos Maidana last year.

With those points in mind, THE RING presents a head-to-head analysis of what many believe will be the biggest boxing event in history in terms of money generated, media exposure and worldwide fan interest.

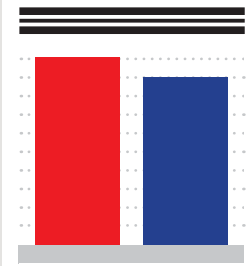
How will the two future first-ballot Hall of Famers match up in the ring? Doug Fischer, the editor of RingTV.com, compares Mayweather and Pacquiao in 20 categories, both physical and intangible, with each fighter rated on a scale of 0 to 5. (A score of 100 would denote the perfect fighter.)

KEY:
MAYWEATHER
PACQUIAO



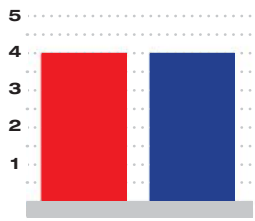
HAND SPEED

Mayweather slightly edges Pacquiao in one-punch hand speed and reflexes. However, Pacquiao still possesses world-class hand speed and appears to deliver multi-punch combinations a bit more quickly than Mayweather.



ENDURANCE

Mayweather, who has gone the 12-round distance 17 times, paces himself over the championship distance better than any active boxer. Pacquiao, who has fought 12 rounds 13 times (14 times counting the Miguel Cotto stoppage, which occurred in the 12th), is no endurance slouch, either. Both veterans have shown the ability to come on strong in the late rounds.



FOOTWORK

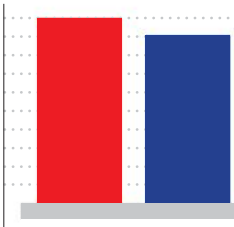
Mayweather has near-perfect foot placement and excellent footwork while Pacquiao is sublimely coordinated with nimble feet that he often uses to befuddle boxers.

POWER (LEAD HAND)

Mayweather's lead hand is more of a tactical tool than a damaging weapon. He uses his jab and left hook to set up or compliment right-hand power shots. Pacquiao's right isn't his primary power hand but it carries a lot of force.

POWER (TRAIL HAND)

Pacquiao's left has always been his bread-and-butter punch and is still a force, as Algieri can attest to. Mayweather's right hand carries underrated pop but its effectiveness has more to do with its accuracy than its power.

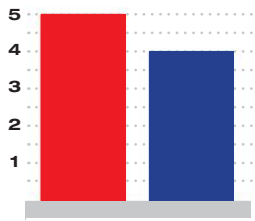


JAB

Mayweather's jab is technically perfect and his go-to punch. Pacquiao's jab is sharp and educated. He expertly uses it to set up his powerful straight left.

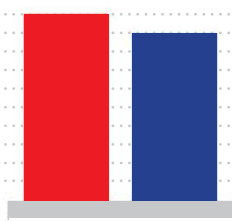
HOOK

Mayweather has an excellent hook in terms of technique and accuracy but it's not a punch he uses often. Pacquiao's hook, which he developed after years of Freddie Roach's instruction, is a formidable weapon but not one that he instinctively uses in the ring.



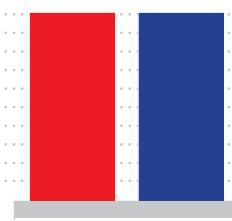
ABILITY TO SLIP AND BLOCK

Mayweather showed some signs of slippage in this department against Maidana but he's still one of the sport's best defensive ring generals and will go down as one of the best in boxing history. Pacquiao's head- and upper-body movement isn't as good as it was six or seven years ago but his in-and-out footwork makes him hard to hit.



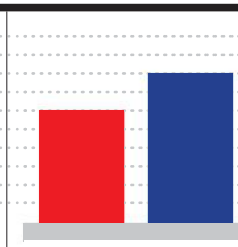
PHYSICAL CONDITION

Mayweather is a superbly gifted all-around athlete who has totally dedicated himself to year-round training. Pacquiao is blessed with otherworldly athletic talent but isn't always in 100 percent physical shape for his fights (though even at 80 percent he's in better condition than most world-class boxers).



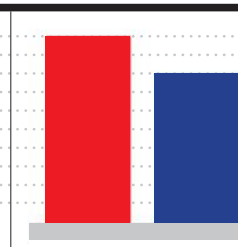
POISE AND ABILITY TO COPE WITH EXTERNAL PRESSURES

Being in the spotlight and under pressure is second nature to both boxers. Mayweather craves attention and seems to feed off the media's obsession with him (even when it's negative). Pacquiao is one of the most recognizable athletes on the planet and a bona fide hero in his native Philippines, where he is a congressman.



KILLER INSTINCT

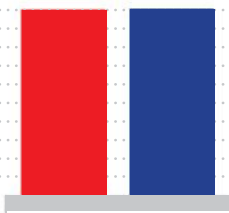
Pacquiao, once one of boxing's most reliable finishers, has gotten a bit soft with age. He hasn't scored a knockout since the Cotto fight and he wasn't trying to force that stoppage. Mayweather's defensive style and aversion to risk-taking in the ring prevents him from going for the KO.



INTELLIGENCE AND STRATEGIC DEXTERITY

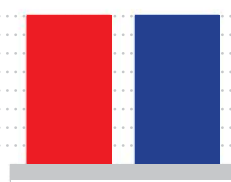
Mayweather is among the smartest pure boxers in the sport. Few active fighters can control a match or dissect an opponent as well as he does. Pacquiao's ring IQ is a bit underrated, as is the case with many offensive fighters. He has methods to his offense and he usually follows game plans well.

PACQUIAO: (KILLER INSTINCT) CHRIS HYDE/GETTY IMAGES, (BODY PUNCHING) ALEXIS CUAREZMA/GETTY IMAGES; MAYWEATHER: (JAB) AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES, (PHYSICAL CONDITION/FOOTWORK) ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES



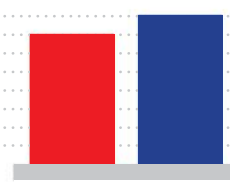
EXPERIENCE

Pacquiao, who has been a pro for 20 years, has fought 407 rounds in 64 bouts. Mayweather, an 18-year pro, has fought 363 rounds in 47 bouts. They've both faced a Who's Who of boxing during the past two decades.



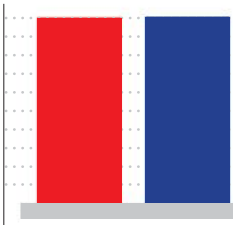
BODY PUNCHING

Mayweather and Pacquiao don't go to the body often but both veterans land with power and precision when they do.



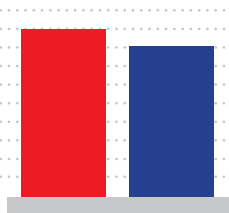
INFIGHTING SKILLS

Pacquiao is more dangerous when attacking from a distance but thanks to good footwork, combination punching and fast reflexes, he can do a lot of damage when in close. Mayweather does more defending and neutralizing than punching when in the trenches but he's a capable infighter.



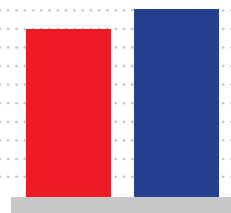
QUALITY OF OPPONENTS

Both Mayweather and Pacquiao have faced more than a dozen world titleholders, including numerous future Hall of Famers. Pacquiao has fought some more than once, such as Marquez (four times), Morales (three) and Marco Antonio Barrera (twice).



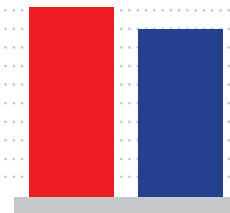
CHIN AND RESILIENCE

Thanks to his awesome defense, Mayweather's chin is a bit underrated but he's survived bombs (and wobbly moments) from some heavy-hitters, including Zab Judah and Shane Mosley. Until Marquez knocked him cold, Pacquiao had shown very good whiskers, having taken solid shots from Erik Morales, Miguel Cotto, Antonio Margarito and Mosley without blinking.



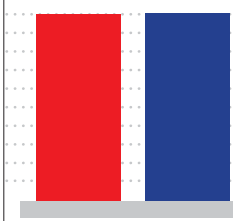
CROSS/ UPPERCUT

Pacquiao's left cross is still quick, powerful and accurate, and it's still his most effective punch. He doesn't use uppercuts nearly as much as he once did but he delivers them with good leverage. Mayweather's right hand has enough power to earn respect from the most durable of opponents. Like his jab, his straight right – which he often leads with – is delivered with nearly perfect timing and technique.



ATHLETICISM

Mayweather appears to be the better preserved of the two veterans. He struggled at times with the free-swinging Maidana but exhibited prime speed, reflexes and mobility against Robert Guerrero and Canelo Alvarez in 2013. Pacquiao is no longer in his prime but he's a once-in-a-generation athletic talent, as evidenced by his ability to compete at the world-class level from flyweight to welterweight.



CORNER

Pacquiao's longtime coach is the most accomplished active trainer in boxing, recent Hall of Fame inductee Freddie Roach. Mayweather is currently trained by his father, who obviously did a masterful job with his son but has also demonstrated his ability by guiding Oscar De La Hoya, Chad Dawson and Steve Forbes to world-title victories.

TOTAL:

90
MAYWEATHER

88
PACQUIAO

SUMMARY AND PREDICTION:

Mayweather will beat Pacquiao to the jab and score with clean right hands in the early rounds of the bout. However, once the Filipino hero warms up in the middle rounds, his quick southpaw combinations will back the undefeated American to the ropes where the odds favorite might experience a wobbly moment or two. The two stars will go tit for tat in the late rounds before Mayweather figures out how to contain Pacquiao with jab-and-grab tactics down the stretch of an entertaining (though not thrilling) championship bout.

★ Mayweather wins a close, perhaps split or controversial, decision.

Canelo Alvarez figures his time at the top will come soon enough.

DENIS PORO/GETTY IMAGES

CANELO BIDES HIS TIME

ALVAREZ WAS WILLING TO STEP ASIDE ON MAY 2 BUT THE FUTURE, IT SEEMS, IS HIS

By **Ron Borges**

Even the most popular Mexican fighter since Julio Cesar Chavez Sr. must sometimes accept the stern realities of the boxing business. To fight them is to wage a war you cannot win. And so, if you are smart, you do what Sun Tzu advises in "The Art of War."

You retreat to attack.

In the case of Canelo Alvarez that means understanding there are limits on a rising star, although to be fair not many. According to his promoter, that limit is the specter of a Floyd Mayweather Jr.-Manny Pacquiao showdown, an event not even the combined star-power of Alvarez and Oscar De La Hoya, who promotes him, is enough to stand in front of.

That is why, on the January day he announced Alvarez would fight mercurial but dangerous James Kirkland, De La Hoya declared that the fight would be on Cinco de Mayo weekend ... unless Mayweather opted to face Pacquiao on May 2, the same Saturday night on which Alvarez desperately wanted to fight. Although De La Hoya well understood the cultural significance of the date to Alvarez, he also knew the wise choice was to

move, perhaps going a week later at the Alamodome or another site rather than on May 2 in Las Vegas' Thomas and Mack Center.

Yet such is De La Hoya's view of Alvarez's popularity that he quickly added if Mayweather were to fight anyone else – including middleweight champion Miguel Cotto or England's Amir Khan – he would put Alvarez's fight up against them come what may. In his opinion, that was not a fool's errand. It was a signal that he believes, as do many others, that Alvarez is the emerging face of boxing at the dawn of a new era for the sport.

Such is the star power Mayweather and Pacquiao carry that De La Hoya would defer to them. His public reasoning was "out of respect for the fans" but the fact is the cable industry with whom he, and he hopes Alvarez, will do much business going forward would have been livid if boxing's biggest Hispanic star on regular HBO was pitted against the sport's biggest pay-per-view fight.

That would have made for an interesting analysis after the fact, however. Would the rising star fighting on premium cable but with no exorbitant pay-per-view fee tacked on put a dent into what many in boxing believe could become the first bout to do 3 million pay-per-view sales at $99.99 a pop?

We'll never know, but the marketplace power of Mayweather and Pacquiao is the type Alvarez is pursuing and at the age of only 24 he appears well on his way to achieving it at a time when his chief box-office rivals are approaching their dotage. As in boxing itself, timing is everything.

At 38, Mayweather is approaching the end of a long reign atop both the fistic side and the business side of the sport, and at 36 Manny Pacquiao finds himself in the same circumstance. There are few big fights left for either other than with each other and both know, whether they have yet admitted it to themselves or not, that the clock is ticking. The calendar no longer works to their advantage. The undeniable fact of the boxer's life is that only Father Time is truly undefeated.

Today, as boxing's standard-bearers for more than a decade move closer to facing him and each other, Alvarez lurks closely behind, much younger and full of belief in himself. His goal is to become the new face of boxing, a sport that sorely needs one, and he is most certainly the frontrunner in terms of pay-per-view potential and popularity in boxing's most important demographic – the loyal Latino fight fan who has buttressed the sport against its waning popularity with the average American fan.

THE MARKETPLACE POWER OF MAYWEATHER AND PACQUIAO IS THE TYPE ALVAREZ IS PURSUING.

The hope had been that Alvarez would be facing Cotto rather than Kirkland, a second-tier fighter to be sure although a dangerous one. But when Cotto continued to dither during negotiations Alvarez suddenly walked away in mid-January. Frustrated by Cotto's refusal to commit and tired of waiting, he and De La Hoya decided there was no deal to make, believing that Cotto was trying to use them as leverage in hopes of landing a more lucrative rematch with Mayweather on May 2 if the Pacquiao fight fell through.

"They did not accept," De La Hoya explained at the time, "so Canelo decided to move on. We had our fifth deadline (Jan. 16) and Canelo decided he is not going to be waiting for nobody."

Six days later, Kirkland (32-1, 28 knockouts) had agreed and Alvarez (44-1-1, 31 KOs) was set to fight for the first time since his decision to leave Showtime and return to HBO, where he was first introduced to American fight fans and fought eight of his nine fights between mid-2010 and early 2013. He never actually left HBO but rather was a victim of a feud between HBO Sports president Ken Hershman and former Golden Boy Promotions CEO Richard Schaefer that resulted in all Golden Boy fighters being effectively banned from their airways until Schaefer and De La Hoya split last year.

Alvarez fought his last five fights on Showtime or Showtime Pay-Per-View, winning THE RING junior middleweight title and suffering his only loss to Mayweather on Sept. 9, 2013. A year later almost to the day, De La Hoya announced they were returning to HBO, only months after Bernard Hopkins, a partner in Golden Boy promotions, made a similar shift.

Showtime executives had little to say about Hopkins' decision but when Alvarez jumped ship, Showtime boxing executive Stephen Espinoza accused De La Hoya of reneging on a verbal commitment to sign a new deal with Alvarez. De La Hoya didn't recall any such exchange and, more importantly, made clear the decision was Alvarez's.

"I'm doing what Canelo asked of me," De La Hoya insisted. "Canelo expressed many months ago that he would love to explore the possibility of fighting on HBO and as his promoter I have to obviously

DENIS POROY/GETTY IMAGES

Alvarez moved on to James Kirkland when it became clear that Miguel Cotto wasn't going to accept an offer to fight him.

Alvarez (left) couldn't get past Mayweather but it didn't damage his career.

ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

do whatever possible to grant his wishes."

Alvarez's reasoning, it seems, centered on the two big Mexican holidays in May and September. Mayweather dominated those dates and as long as Alvarez was at Showtime he was never going to be given those dates, so his choice was clear.

"There were many factors involved in making the decision but recouping the dates [was important]," Alvarez said on the day the multi-fight deal was announced. "I always wanted to fight on Cinco de Mayo and in September [on the Mexican Independence Day weekend] because being Mexican those are always the dates that are celebrated. I'm excited to fulfill my dreams of continuing that Mexican tradition. For all my career I have wanted to fight on HBO for one main reason: I believe it will allow more of my fans to see me in action."

Time will tell if it was a wise move because Showtime's close relationship with boxing's most powerful manager, Al Haymon, has led its parent company, CBS, to sign on for a series of Saturday afternoon boxing events on network television. Although Alvarez would never have fought on those cards, he could have surely benefited from the overall promotional opportunities that will go with it for other Showtime events.

Despite that, former HBO executive and active promoter Lou DiBella believes Alvarez is in a different situation from most fighters his age.

"He has the potential to be the next guy," DiBella said. "He's charismatic, he's good looking. He has a lot of ability to fill the Julio Cesar Chavez void. I'm not saying he's Chavez. No one is. But can he be 'A' big thing? Yes. Can he become 'THE' big thing? It's possible but I don't know."

DiBella suggested one thing Alvarez should consider is mastering English because in his mind that would give him the potential to become a crossover star, as De La Hoya was. Someone who would continue to dominate the Latino market but who could elevate himself outside it as well.

"He's leaving a lot of money on the table by not learning English," DiBella said. "But remember: He's only 24. He's still a baby in boxing. And not fighting on pay-per-view right now is also helpful. Pay-per-view is a limited audience. The more people who see Canelo the better chance he becomes that next face of the sport."

The only exception to that, in DiBella's mind, would have been to make the Cotto fight. That is obviously a pay-per-view show and could still happen. If it does, it could also be Alvarez's breakthrough moment.

"If he wants to replace Mayweather and Pacquiao as the biggest draw in boxing certain things have to happen," DiBella said. "If he ripped apart Cotto, that would be a good start."

In one sense, Alvarez may be perfectly situated at HBO to make that great leap forward because Cotto is a network and promotional free agent and HBO has a long-term deal with unified middleweight champion Gennady Golovkin, a rising star himself with concussive knockout power. If in the next 12-18 months Alvarez defeated Cotto, had a spectacular win or two on either side of it and then squared off against Golovkin, it would become a pay-per-view bonanza.

To come to fruition, though, that would require several things to happen, none of which are easy. First, HBO must push to make those fights and Alvarez must truly be what De La Hoya insists he is.

"He wants those kind of fights," De La Hoya said. "You don't have to ask him [to agree]. We intend to give the fans the fights they want to see."

If they do, and Alvarez triumphs, then he may not need to learn English to become what he, De La Hoya and HBO all hope he will become. Showtime certainly invested considerable time and money to build his career believing he had that kind of in-ring skills and out-of-ring presence. Then, just as he seemed ready to burn brightest, he left, leaving Showtime without the biggest name in the sport that's not Mayweather or Pacquiao.

Few fighters would have been able to lose so one-sidedly to Mayweather without losing any luster with their core audience but Hispanic fight fans felt, as did Alvarez, that he lost to someone who had no interest in fighting. That formula worked for Mayweather but what works best for fans is the devastating knockout, like the one Alvarez put on Alfredo Angulo in his first fight back after the loss. In the end, it is always the heavy hands fight fans love most.

Although it was followed by an ugly win over slick Erislandy Lara, what that fight and his earlier win over Austin Trout (which set up the Mayweather match) prove is that he's willing to take on anyone, even if their style does not mesh well with his.

Kirkland is the antithesis of Lara and Trout, an aggressive sort who should make for good action and allow Alvarez to display his skills. Certainly a fight with Cotto, if it were to follow in the fall, would be a Hispanic bonanza: two skilled and aggressive fighters, one Mexican and the other Puerto Rican, continuing a long history of grudge matches between the two cultures.

Then, looming in the distance, stands Golovkin, who has one of the highest knockout percentages in championship boxing history. In a sense it is the perfect storm, a series of fights that could create boxing's next Big Thing.

ROLL DEONTAY

WILDER HAS MADE FOOTBALL HOTBED TUSCALOOSA, ALABAMA, A BOXING TOWN TOO WITH HIS METEORIC RISE FROM RAW TALENT TO HEAVYWEIGHT TITLEHOLDER

By **D.C. Reeves**

Thousands of fans lined both sides of a downtown artery and waved posters to draw Deontay Wilder's attention as the wheels of his classic, cherry-red Cadillac convertible began to roll north across Paul W. Bryant Drive, a street named for a man synonymous with celebrations in Wilder's football-obsessed hometown.

Tuscaloosa, Alabama, was celebrating a new champion this day in late January.

Wilder, born and raised in a town devoid of any boxing history before him, smiled as he took in the recognition and waved back with two souvenirs from the fight of his life: a bandaged right hand that was broken during his clinical domination of Bermane Stiverne on Jan. 17 and, strapped over his cream sweater vest, his new WBC heavyweight title belt.

Wilder's career had never moved this slowly. At least for the moment, that was fine by him.

In 2005, he was 19 and had two jobs to support his 1-year-old daughter, Naieya, who was born with the congenital spinal disorder spina bifida. He wasn't sure she would ever walk. Wilder found the only boxing gym, laced up gloves for the first time and wanted to turn pro immediately. He would fight anywhere – barns, backyards, strip malls – for any money he could get.

That was his plan going in, at least.

Instead, it was the start of a frantic ascension that saw Wilder, 29, not only succeed at every step – amateur, Olympics and now as a pro – but do it with less experience than his counterparts.

"It just lets you know that anything is possible," Wilder said following his unanimous-decision win over Stiverne at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas. "It's not about where you're from, it's about what you want to achieve in life and where you're trying to go, and I think we accomplished that. From starting from scrap, you're talking about a guy who didn't know nothing about amateur boxing and now I'm a world champion."

Wilder spent years rolling down this same street in a bigger rig, receiving no recognition.

In 2006, just after he took up boxing, Wilder worked weekdays as the delivery assistant on truck No. 51 for Greene Beverage, the local Budweiser distributor.

Wilder and the driver, Robbie Hallman, would deliver at least 300 cases a day on the bar and restaurant route, and when the University of Alabama had a home football game, the city's needle mover, it ballooned to 1,000 cases and a 12-hour shift.

Deontay Wilder outpointed Bermane Stiverne to become the first American to hold a heavyweight title since 2007.

NAOKI FUKUDA

Never the type to feel sorry for himself, Wilder would forge ahead. First at Burger King, then as a busser at IHOP, then with two jobs at once: Greene Beverage during the week and cooking at Red Lobster on the weekends.

"When I worked at Burger King I wanted to be the best burger-flipper we had," Wilder said. "I wanted to be the best Budweiser truck driver we had. I remember times coming home and saying to myself, 'This is my life?' Well, I chose this life. I went out and had a child so I've got to make the best of it. I remember just sitting back and I was happy with my life. I had money in the bank, I promised myself I would never suffer, I would never sit around here and worry about where I'm going to get money. I told myself I would never be that type of person.

"As long as I'm alive, I'm OK."

The passion followed him into the boxing ring.

Once Wilder was in the swing of his amateur career, he would tell Hallman all about his plan to be world champion one day. Hallman tried to be polite. "I'm thinking the whole time it's not gonna pan out," Hallman said. "But he followed through with everything he said he was going to do."

That's not to say the grind was easy.

"I'd be lifting kegs, lifting beer, my body's tired, but when I got to the gym it's like, 'This is what I love to do,'" Wilder said. "So I just sucked it up and took care of my body when I got home. It was a struggle."

Wilder, adept at dictating his own terms, wouldn't let tough times impact his focus. He would treat beer delivery as a workout, shrugging his shoulders into a bar with 60-pound barrels in each hand. When a regular dolly held 12 cases, Wilder, as exuberant as he is in front of a microphone today, would stack

Wilder has reached great heights in a short time.

RAPID RISE

DEONTAY WILDER'S ACCELERATED ASCENSION TO THE TOP OF THE BOXING WORLD

2005 – Wannabe football or basketball player takes up boxing at 19 in his hometown of Tuscaloosa, Ala.

2007 – Becomes U.S. amateur heavyweight (201 pounds) champion in spite of his inexperience.

2008 – Wins the bronze medal in the heavyweight division at the Beijing Olympics in August.

2008 – Knocks out Ethan Cox in the second round of his pro debut in November.

2008-14 – Stops his first 32 opponents, including Sergei Liakhovich and Malik Scott.

2015 – Defeats Bermane Stiverne by a one-sided decision to win the WBC heavyweight title.

12 then cradle three more between his chest and long arms just to see if he could do it.

Sometimes he'd overdo it, too. Wilder would take a full 165-pound keg, straddle it over one shoulder and walk it across slippery kitchen floors.

"I said, 'Deontay, I know you can do this,'" Hallman said. "'Please don't ever do that again.'"

The only extended time Wilder ever missed on the truck was for the Golden Gloves in 2007 and for the Olympics in 2008. He would stay on the truck until 2010, two years into his pro career, until boxing could pay the bills.

When Wilder left, Greene Beverage had to make up for the loss. They would buy Hallman a $4,000 electric dolly to replace Wilder's physical capabilities.

"I don't accept less for my life, I always had high goals for myself," Wilder said. "Even if I had to have three jobs, I would work it to support what I need to do and what I need to sacrifice to live a nice life."

Everything about Wilder is quick. His hands. His feet. His mouth. His rise to fame.

He walked into Sky Gym, crammed into Unit 10 of a worn aluminum office complex in nearby Northport, a small town just north of Tuscaloosa, after he heard about it through a friend who was about to try boxing. Wilder followed along, meeting the gym's owner, Jay Deas. Deas remains Wilder's co-manager and co-trainer.

"First day walking in, I remember the speed bag being hit, the heavy bag being thumped at," Wilder said. "I didn't even know there was a gym here in Tuscaloosa or in the state of Alabama period."

Wilder started to put the state on the boxing map.

In 2007, just over a year from his first day, he became the first fighter ever to win a Golden Gloves championship with fewer than 20 amateur bouts. In 2008, he was the only American boxer to medal at the Beijing Olympics and stands today as the last male U.S. fighter to medal. He was by far the least experienced fighter on the U.S. team. Deas claims Wilder, who took bronze, was the least experienced among all 300-plus fighters competing from around the world at any weight.

Entering the Stiverne fight, Wilder had logged 55 total rounds in 32 bouts as a professional, spending a grand total of 2 hours, 7 minutes, 18 seconds in the ring. That's less than four minutes a fight. Hardly a second in the ring has been inconsequential; Wilder has racked up 17 first-round KOs.

A lot of that domination would be at the expense of questionable competition, criticism Wilder would take – and hear often – all the way until the Stiverne win.

Deas, however, said there was purpose behind it, especially the early bouts. The idea was to treat the beginning of Wilder's pro career as an extension of his short amateur stint. While Wilder was flashing that punishing right hand, he still had plenty of learning to do.

In 2008, Deas, who had trained Wilder on his own, brought on Mark Breland, a 1984 Olympic gold medalist, former welterweight world champion and one of the most decorated amateur fighters in New York history, as a co-trainer to help speed that learning curve along.

"We had a game plan from the beginning so he could see all different styles of boxers," Deas said. "Big guys, small guys, tall, short, lefties, movers, runners, punchers, holders – a little bit of everything, so that when we did climb up the ladder he'd be used to a little bit of everything and have seen a little bit of everything."

"For every great war there's a plan to win it," Wilder said. "For me, I had to have a plan set, so my plan was to be the best I can be and to be the heavyweight champion of the world. I always had that goal when I came in."

Wilder's victory over Bermane Stiverne was followed by a parade in his native Tuscaloosa, Ala.

More questions arose about Wilder. Could he take a punch? Could the man who had never been out of the fourth round go deep into a fight?

Wilder never liked the criticism, often firing back at the fans and media who suggested he would be the division's next American heavyweight fraud. In many ways, the way he beat Stiverne – controlling the fight and winning a unanimous decision – answered more questions about his development than an abrupt knockout ever could.

"I take boxing seriously. This is my job," Wilder said after the fight. "I take it very serious. I understood where people were coming from when they had those questions because they hadn't seen me do it.

"Now y'all know."

Wilder has adopted the tempo of his career. He doesn't slow down.

He remains active in the gym year round, whether or not a specific matchup is scheduled, so he's ready to fight at any time. He started that early as an avenue to build up quick experience and cash.

He fought feverishly his first four years as a pro, taking seven bouts in 2009 and six apiece in 2010, 2011 and 2012.

"Deontay just does Deontay, I stay in my own lane," Wilder said. "I believe in what I've been taught and what we do in the gym. We work hard. People don't understand how hard of a worker I am. You're looking at a guy who has never had anything given to him. We work hard in the gym. Boxing is like my 9 to 5, I'm in the gym every day."

In 2012, Wilder got a glimpse of what his future could hold, going to Austria and sparring more than 45 rounds with champ Wladimir Klitschko as Klitschko prepared for Mariusz Wach.

Wilder's approach to his career fits his psyche. He has a short attention span. It's something his trainers account for when they craft his fight plan. He's always doing something different. Routines are changed constantly.

It continued as Wilder prepared for Stiverne. Instead of a conventional four weeks of sparring, his team stretched it to eight weeks, alternating a week of sparring with a week of correcting mistakes.

It gave his team confidence that Wilder, who had never seen the fifth round as a pro, could go all 12 if he needed to.

"I think Stiverne was more set on trying to get him to go the distance and tire out," Breland said. "By the fifth round [Stiverne] was breathing hard."

Wilder says he won't slow down now that he has the title. His hand should be 100 percent by early March, which should allow him to fight in June or July. He wants to fight at least one more time in 2015. Wilder has pinpointed Tyson Fury but that fight is unlikely to take place this summer. Though many hurdles remain, a potential Klitschko-Wilder unification could be in the cards down the road.

"He is going to be an active champion," Deas said. "He won't be a champion that fights just once a year."

The parade wound down at the Tuscaloosa Amphitheater, which hugs the southern bank of the Black Warrior River. The throng cheered Wilder on as he strode toward a podium that stood in the middle of a makeshift ring. Fireworks reached the sky behind him as he stepped through the ropes.

Wilder knows all this pomp at home is merely a microcosm of his new job description as a new, flashy, charismatic American heavyweight champ.

"I know it's a big deal and a big responsibility but I accept it all," Wilder said. "I think I'm the man for the job, I think I'm a natural-born leader, I was born to do this. I love to make history. For me to be able to bring [the heavyweight division] alive is something that people have been yearning for."

Things were already moving fast for Wilder after the win. Fans greeted him at the Birmingham Airport, something that hasn't happened since the Olympics. Wilder spent all of Super Bowl week in Arizona building his brand.

Deas and Wilder can't keep up with up with all the media requests pouring in.

Here's the good news for Wilder: He is accustomed to this kind of speed.

"This is just the beginning," Wilder said to the hometown crowd with the belt raised in one hand. "Alabama, we're here, baby." RING

SWEET BIRTHPLACE ALABAMA

Deontay Wilder is the first important boxer from Tuscaloosa but he is hardly the only notable athlete from Alabama. Take a look at this list of others born in the state (alphabetical order).

Henry Aaron (baseball)
Charles Barkley (basketball)
Mia Hamm (soccer)
Evander Holyfield (boxing)
Bo Jackson (football and baseball)
Carl Lewis (track and field)
Joe Louis (boxing)
Willie Mays (baseball)
Willie McCovey (baseball)
Jesse Owens (track and field)
Satchel Paige (baseball)
Ozzie Smith (baseball)
Bart Starr (football)

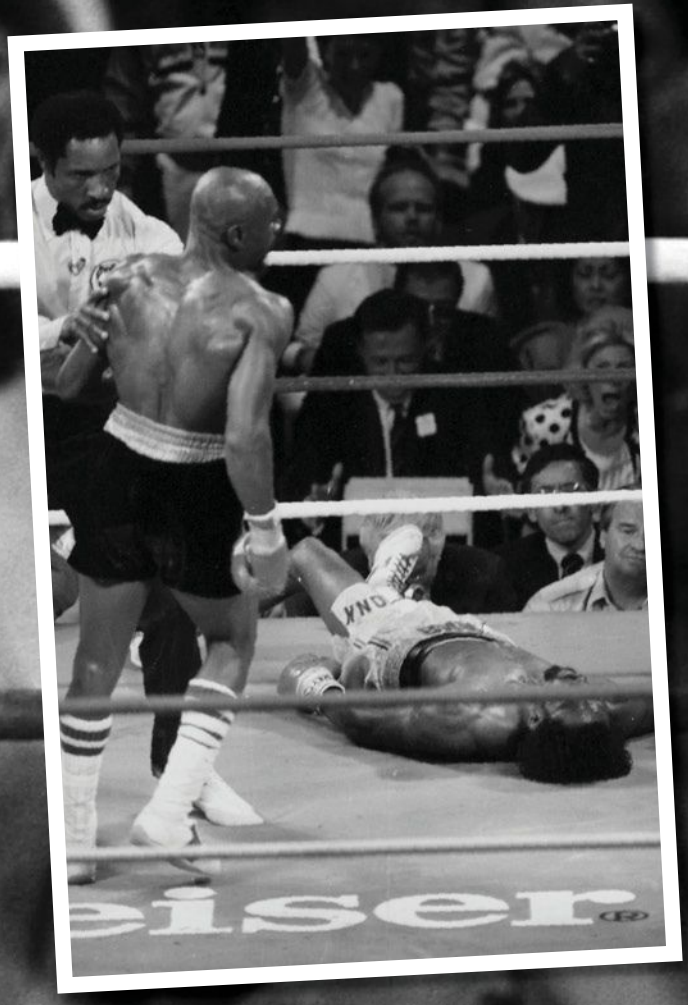
Erin Nelson-Tuscaloosa News

'EIGHT MINUTES OF HELL'

THE FEROCITY OF **HAGLER-HEARNS** STILL REVERBERATES THREE DECADES LATER

By **Ron Borges**

Thomas Hearns ended up on his back after two-plus rounds of mayhem.



There is a process great boxers go through during the early stages of a prizefight that is born out of hard-earned respect for their opponent and a clear understanding of boxing's cruel nature. It is a process of elimination designed to avoid being eliminated yourself.

To disrespect either your opponent or boxing's hard heart is to ignore the stark reality that the end can come at any moment. To forget that, especially in the early, adrenaline-filled minutes of a high-profile fight when you have not yet established your plan nor fully grasped that of your opponent, is to court disaster. And so great fighters, schooled in their craft through a painfully difficult learning process, take their time.

They move cautiously at first. They poke, they prod, they examine and re-examine. They are like a master chef shopping for the freshest vegetables in an open-air market. They are searching.

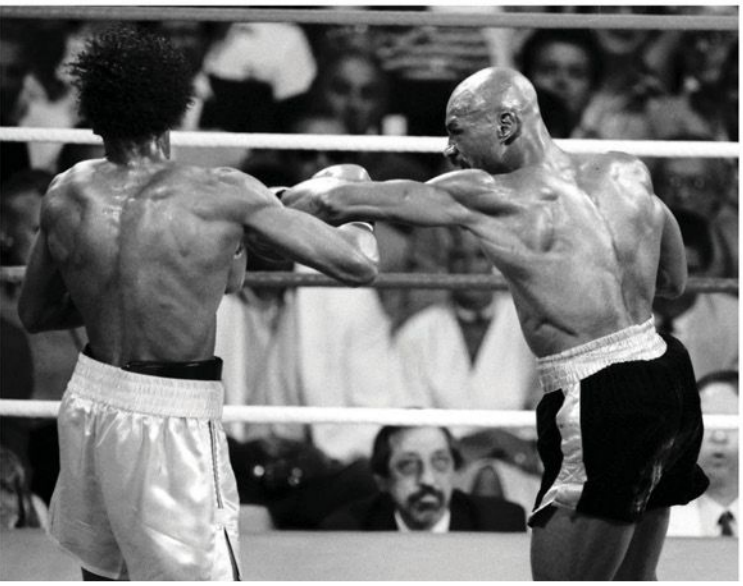
Searching for openings, for safe havens, for opportunity, always knowing it may be many rounds before they can exploit what they have learned.

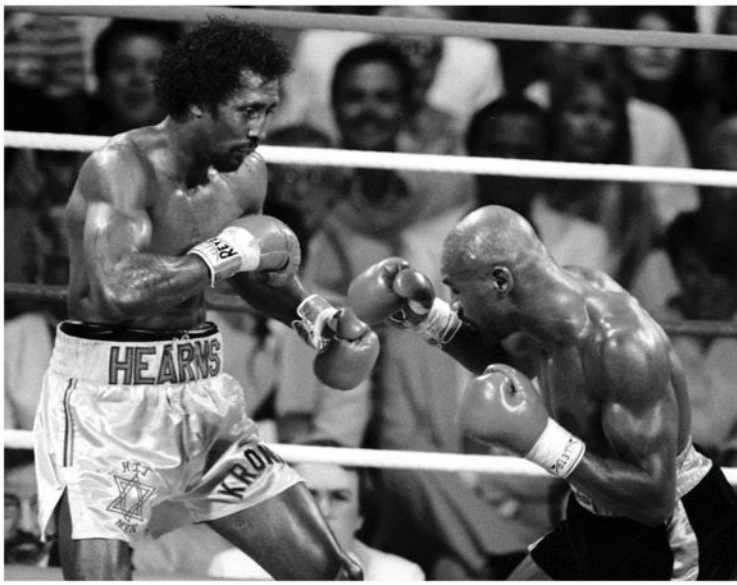
That is what made what happened on April 15, 1985, in an outdoor arena behind Caesars Palace so astonishing. It is in large part why what two proud and powerful prizefighters did that night remains, in the opinion of many, the most exhilarating eight minutes in boxing history.

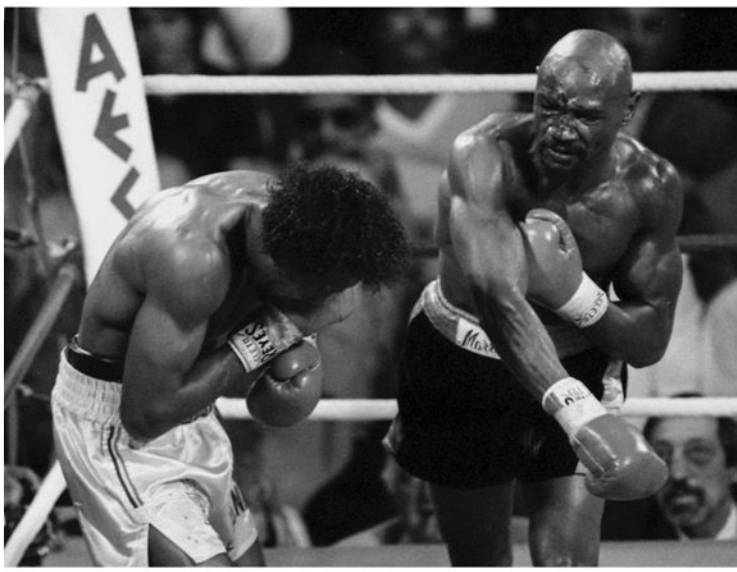
When longtime boxing analyst Al Bernstein is asked what he recalls first of the brutally beautiful eight minutes shared by Marvelous Marvin Hagler and Thomas Hearns that night in Las Vegas, he doesn't have to ponder the question. The answer is as clear today as it was 30 years ago.

"The ferocity of that first round surprised me," said Bernstein, who worked the closed-circuit broadcast with Al Michaels. "There was not

THE RING MAGAZINE







The fighters gave and took with abandon for as long as the fight lasted.

one moment of feeling-out process. I'd never seen anything like that before in such a big fight or since.

"Certainly it's true that Marvin imposed that on Tommy but it wasn't like Tommy Hearns shied away from it either."

The first round of that fight is one of the most watched moments in boxing history. It was a savage engagement, like two pit bulls ripping and tearing at each other with no regard for their personal safety or concern about their opponent's. It was the essence of fighting and the absence of boxing.

"Explosion!" snaps longtime boxing analyst Teddy Atlas when asked to give the first word that comes to mind when someone says "Hagler-Hearns." "It was like the shootout at the OK Corral."

Hagler and Hearns wasted no time that night on introductions. Having built up a massive distaste for each other after a two-week, 20-city promotional tour, each had come to the arena to impose his will upon the other.

The fight had been a long time incubating, having originally been scheduled three years earlier only to have Hearns suffer an injury to his right hand, forcing first a postponement and finally a cancellation that enraged Hagler.

"Do you know how many people would give $1 million for that little baby pinkie?" Hagler snapped when discussing the cancellation at the time. "They'd cut that thing off."

Long a victim of boxing politics and firmly convinced the sport's power brokers were massed against him, Hagler seethed for three long years, his heart hardening into a stone when Hearns' name was mentioned until finally there they were, facing each other.

Day after day, city after city, they hurled insults, promised mayhem and quickly grew tired of each other. At one press conference, Hagler stuffed

THE RING MAGAZINE

dinner napkins in his ears to block out Hearns' dire warnings. At nearly every meeting Hagler wore a baseball cap with the word "WAR" across the front. It was a succinct expression of how he looked at his life's work.

And so they stood facing each other day after day, city after city, one guy calling himself "Hitman," the other walking around constantly talking about "destroy" and "destruction" regardless of what he was asked. Finally they buried so deeply under each other's skin that they nearly came to blows at one press briefing. By fight night, neither could think of anything but pain.

When the 30-year-old Hagler stood in front of 15,141 screaming fans waiting for his introduction he began pelting himself in the side of the head so furiously it led Associated Press boxing writer Eddie Schuyler to remark, "If the introduction lasted another minute, Marvin would have TKO'd himself."

When he finally came out of his corner, Hagler was carrying with him all the frustrations and broken dreams of his whole life and he was going to take them out on somebody else. He had to decide "How much is this worth to me?" He decided it was worth a lot.

Decades later, Hagler and Hearns have become friends in the way old warriors who have co-mingled their blood and put each other at risk sometimes do. Not on that night, though. That night was not about art. It was about aggression boiling over.

"Tommy brought the dog out in me that night," Hagler once recalled. "I thank him for it."

Those first three minutes probably decided the fight, Hearns clipping Hagler with the kind of right hand that had sent Roberto Duran face-first to the canvas less than a year earlier, out before he hit the floor. When it exploded on Hagler's face early in the round it clearly shook him.

"He definitely tried to put the bomb on me," said Hagler (60-2-2, with 50 knockouts, going into the fight). "He can punch."

The broadcasters quickly leapt in, hinting that doom might soon follow and so it did, although not in the manner they assumed. Instead of falling, or at least wavering, Hagler shook his head and walked toward Hearns with an assassin's single-minded relentlessness.

"Early that round, Hearns hit Hagler with as good a right hand as he ever hit anyone with," recalled Larry Merchant, who worked the delayed broadcast for HBO with Barry Tompkins and Sugar Ray Leonard. "He may have hurt him but Marvin came right back. I remember thinking, 'This fight is over.' It was just a matter of when."

It is easy to say that now but not so easy to imagine 30 years ago. While Hagler had clearly taken the best of Hearns in those early moments, the two continually bombed each other for the full three minutes and when they were done both were still standing but already damaged goods.

Hearns, it turned out, came back to the corner and told trainer Emanuel Steward his right hand was broken, which was like telling a platoon of Marine riflemen half their bullets were gone.

"I hit him a little too high up on his head," Hearns later explained. "He had a hard head. I couldn't believe how hard this man's head was.

"I said, 'I see why you keep your head bald, shaved bald. You got a weapon there. You got a hard weapon.'"

That injury was compounded, Steward contended until the day he died, by a member of Hearns' nearly endless entourage having gone to his suite in the hours before the fight and given him a massage. Steward always insisted that was what took Hearns' legs away but there was a simpler explanation – Marvin Hagler.

"That first round took everything I had, man," Hearns (40-1, with 34 KOs, going into the fight) said at the time. "My legs were gone, man."

Whatever had stolen them, it was quickly apparent in the second round that this was not the Hearns who had boxed so beautifully for most of his first fight with Leonard, surprisingly losing the slugfest it became after having won the boxing match it was for much of the night.

"A massage leaves the body spent," Steward said. "I knew then that was a major problem."

Whatever the truth of Steward's explanation, there is no question that by midway through the round, though the pace had slowed, Hagler had begun to close the distance and was hurting Hearns, who seldom chose to take a backward step.

"The reason I started out punching was that Marvin started coming in and I had to show Marvin I deserved some respect," Hearns explained later.

It was a reasonable reaction under normal circumstances. But this was not a normal opponent. This was a middleweight champion who had not lost in nine years. It was a fighter once named the third-greatest middleweight and 17th-greatest fighter of all time by THE RING. It was a guy with a hard head and a hard edge.

Hearns' fists had sliced open a deep, nasty cut on Hagler's forehead in the opening round, though, and it began to spill blood across his face as if someone had poured a can of red paint on that bald noggin. But Hagler ignored it as he ignored Hearns' right hand, using his strength and doggedness to slowly take away Hearns' tiring legs.

"I was very conscious of the race against time," Bernstein remembered. "That cut was spilling blood on Marvin's face and when referee Richard Steele called the doctor in early in the third round to look at it you knew the clock was ticking.

"Had the fight gone a few more rounds Tommy Hearns may have won by stoppage, the cut was so bad. But I think Marvin came to the ring that night with the idea of making something dramatic happen and he

did."

Hearns began Round 3 wisely on his toes, constantly circling and using his 78-inch reach to land his jab. Initially it seemed to be working. But despite a three-inch reach disadvantage, Hagler soon found a way to get inside. And then, suddenly and without warning, Steele was between them, ordering Hagler over to see Dr. Donald Romeo about a minute into the round.

Hagler followed him as instructed but in the back of his mind he had to be thinking, "Here we go again. They're going to find some way to take from me what I've earned. I'll decide if I can't go on."

As Romeo dabbed at the cut Hagler knew to the marrow of his bones this was – one way or another – his moment. He knew he had to do something and it must be now.

"If I had lost, I would have had nothing," Hagler once said when asked to describe that moment of desperation.

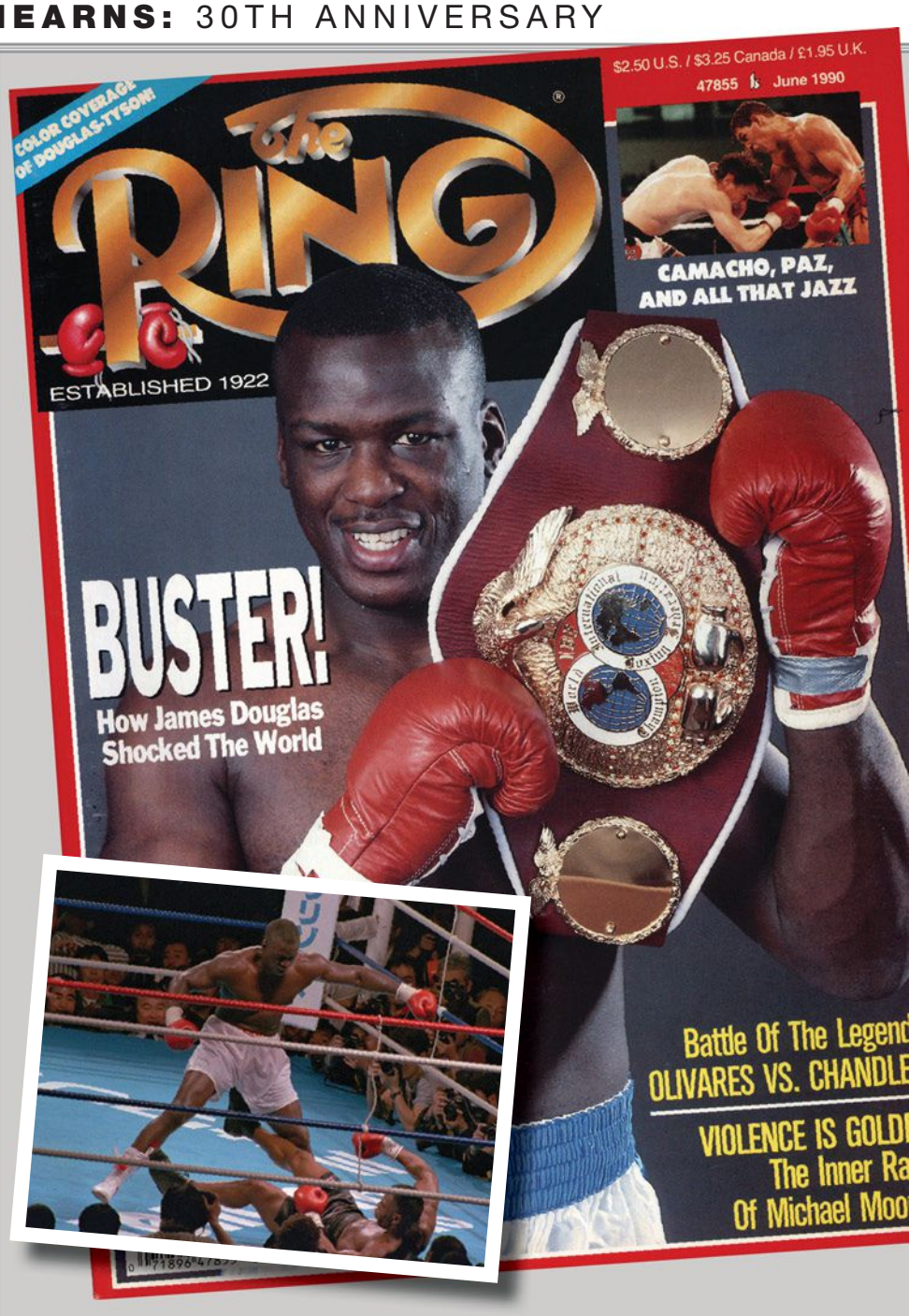
With the fresh wetness of his own blood spattered across his face he looked like a Jackson Pollack painting, but after Romeo released him Hagler bore in on Hearns like a boll weevil, hurting him first with an overhand left that drove Hearns to the ropes.

Having trapped his prey. Hagler ripped two shots to Hearns' hips as the challenger lay on the ropes. Both made Hearns wince.

Hagler was stalking him now and soon a right hand high on the head staggered Hearns, his legs having now totally abandoned him like disloyal lieges cowering in the shadows. As Hearns stumbled backward, his arms akimbo and his mind numbing over, Hagler ran toward him, landing a right to the chin that made Hearns go limp.

As Hearns began to fall forward, heading to the floor, Hagler threw two uppercuts, the first landing but the second flying off course. It didn't matter.

"It was a tomahawk followed by an axe," is the way matchmaker



UPSET OF THE CENTURY

Buster Douglas did the impossible 25 years ago February: He knocked out the seemingly unbeatable Mike Tyson.

Tyson was a juggernaut in the mid- and late-1980s. Iron Mike won his first 37 fights (all but four by knockout) and became the youngest heavyweight champ in history by stopping Trevor Berbick in 1986. Thus, when he agreed to fight the talented but inconsistent Douglas on Feb. 11, 1990, in Tokyo, few gave it much thought.

Until the fight, that is. Douglas, a 42-1 underdog, stunned Tyson and the world by knocking out the champion and removing any aura of his invincibility.

That fight turned the boxing world upside down, making it one of the most memorable events ever in the sport.

To read more about Tyson-Douglas, please go to bit.ly/tyson-douglas or scan the QR code.

Teddy Brenner described it.

Hearns lay on his back staring at the night sky with unseeing eyes as Steele counted through the fighter's fog. He finally rolled over and pushed himself up at nine but then teetered into Steele's arms for support and it was over at 2:01. In eight minutes, everything between them had been decided.

"I never saw a more exciting fight below the heavyweight division," Merchant said. "Nobody breathed for eight minutes. It was one of those rare fights that exceeded expectations.

"It elevated Marvin. He had been regarded as a walk-you-down kind of fighter who gradually broke opponents down but that fight it was almost as if he said to himself he had to rise to the moment. And he did.

"He was always a determined professional jealous of his standing as middleweight champion. He never left anything outside the ring. Just as he wore his opponents down he wore his skeptics down by fighting the biggest fights and winning. Marvin wanted to be great. That's what drove him."

Hagler was guaranteed $5.6 million plus 40 percent of the gross over $14 million, Hearns $5.4 million plus 35 percent. With the fight grossing over $20 million Hearns netted $7.5 million and Hagler $8.3 million plus a sudden celebrity that earned him national ads for Right Guard deodorant and Pizza Hut that became iconic, as did he.

But a number of years ago, long after he'd retired to life as a celebrity in Milan, Italy, Hagler spoke about what that night and his entire boxing life had been about and it was not money. It was on a moonlit evening in South Africa, the night before he would serve as the analyst as a broken-down Duran tried to make a few bucks at the expense of a young kid named David Radford in an outdoor ring behind a casino in an eight-round fight leading to nothing but a needed payday.

"I always believed I was a true champion," Hagler told me. "Even after the fight (a defeat) with Leonard, I knew. I walk this world and I know who's the real champion. I was champion 7½ years. There's been 50 champions since I retired. They can take the belts away, but in my heart I know who's the true champion.

"I was a poor, young, black kid from the ghetto in Newark who nobody wanted to take serious. Without boxing I would have ended up in the wrong way but I found this love. I wanted to be champion and two guys (the Petronelli brothers, his lifelong managers and trainers) believed in me. Everything I learned in the gym, I did better the next day and they noticed and started to believe.

"I told them one day I'd be a million-dollar fighter and one day I was, but the money was never the important thing to me. I loved to fight. I loved the art of boxing. I understood the money would come if I was true to the sport so I'd give up the nightlife and the girls for 2½ months and train. I paid all my dues, fighting in high-school gyms for no money.

"Before a fight, you didn't want to be around me. I was a nasty guy but boxing is real, man. It's a nasty business. You're in there to hurt people and I did. It was my job. I put my name on that world, and if I go tomorrow I believe it will still be there."

So it will and not far behind will be the name of Tommy Hearns, one of the few fighters not diminished by defeat. Marvin Hagler had been too much for him on April 15, 1985, the night Hearns made his middleweight debut, but not before he showed the world who he was.

"There is a deep affection for Tommy with fans and everyone in boxing," Merchant said. "Tommy happened to come along sandwiched between the best welterweight and the best middleweight of their time, Leonard and Hagler. He paid a price for that.

"He lost to them both but he had many great victories and if you see Tommy at a big event, he's greeted in a warm way that suggests people remember what he did."

Marvin Hagler and Tommy Hearns were partners in a cruel business where someone had to lose and lose violently but sometimes how you do that can elevate you. Not as high as the winner perhaps, but not far below.

About 30 minutes after the bout was stopped, Hearns went to Hagler's locker room to congratulate him. It was a show of sportsmanship almost impossible to understand unless you understood Hearns, a broken but still unbowed warrior.

In the end, leave the final assessment of it all to longtime California promoter Don Chargin, who was working with Jersey Joe Walcott the night Rocky Marciano knocked him out with the most perfect right hook ever thrown. Chargin has seen and promoted thousands upon thousands of fights and been at ringside at nearly every big fight of the past 60 years. And when he thinks of Hagler-Hearns he has one lasting vision.

"That was eight minutes of hell," Chargin said.

Or heaven unless you were a great fighter carried back to your corner in the arms of a man in a tuxedo, crumpled like a broken beach umbrella that had been buffeted by a stiff, relentless gale.

"That was an odd kind of development, wasn't it?" Bernstein recalled. "The man in a tuxedo carrying Tommy back to his corner like he had a baby in his arms. It made Tommy look more vulnerable didn't it? But it was one of those incredible moments that seems to happen in boxing.

"I've always felt one reason Tommy wasn't diminished in the eyes of the public despite losing that night was because everyone knew Marvin was a rock. He would not relent. But Tommy Hearns fought him like a man, whether that was the best thing or not." RING

Amir Khan visited Peshawar, Pakistan, after 132 children were murdered by terrorists there.

HARROWING TALES

KELL BROOK, ANTHONY CROLLA AND **AMIR KHAN** RELATE THEIR TRYING EXPERIENCES

By **Gareth A Davies**

Interest in fighters outside the ring was as important as the news inside it on this side of The Pond in the first weeks of 2015.

Ironic as it may sound, how often do we say that boxers can be safer in the ring, or in the gym, than out in the wider world?

So it was with Kell Brook and Anthony Crolla, recovering from their scares and scrapes, and Amir Khan, who opened up about his recent visit to the country of his forebears, Pakistan, the site of recent atrocities.

Some harrowing tales they recount here.

The bigger men – Carl Froch and Anthony Joshua – were sidelined by injuries and unable to fight early in the year. It has been a funny old time.

Even lightweight Luke Campbell withdrew from the prospect of a thrilling local derby with his hometown rival, Tommy Coyle – they are both from the city of Hull on the East of England, renowned for its trawlers and fishermen who cast nets in the North Sea – after the Olympic gold medalist revealed his father had been diagnosed with cancer and he wanted "to spend every minute possible with his family."

KELL BROOK

I spent a day with Brook in Sheffield, at the gym where Brendan Ingle developed, cajoled and created the world champion welterweight among many others over the last four decades.

Brook told me he was "back to 100 miles per hour" after the machete attack from an assailant on Tenerife, a holiday island off the African coast, two weeks after he took the welterweight title from Shawn Porter last summer.

He said that his thigh, which received 60 stitches and staples, was "not an issue."

"I'm doing everything I used to do – sprinting, moving around the ring in different directions. And I'm fast," he said.

When Brook reflected on what had happened and how his life had

A MAJEED/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

flashed in front of him, there had been an epiphany. Rightly so. Brook had seriously worried not just about his boxing career, but his life.

"Had I not been found by paramedics, I'd have bled to death very easily. I'm very lucky to be alive," he said.

It was a seminal moment.

"When we heard the news from the doctor that I would be able to box again," he said, "it was overwhelming."

A few days later he was pushed out of the hospital in a wheelchair.

"My mum and dad and my missus and my daughter came and wheeled me out," he said. "I remember looking up at the sky as we left the hospital and a gush of wind came. It was one of the small things that people take for granted. Looking at the sun, seeing birds fly. ... I took it all in. I was looking at my daughter and she was smiling and I was thinking how lucky I was to be alive."

The epiphany continued.

"It made me look at life and appreciate it," he said. "We know what we're getting into when we're stepping into that ring. You can legally get killed in there. But I was staring death in the face in Tenerife. I got that second chance and it has made me."

His assailant has not yet been caught.

Brook will step into the ring to defend the IBF strap against Jo Jo Dan on March 28 in Sheffield. But if there was one thing that I took away from that conversation, it was that Brook is hell-bent on a showdown with Khan.

Listen to Brook: "I've been in his shadow since he went to the Olympics. He's been the poster boy and I've been the grafter. It's a bit like Mr. T in "Rocky 3." This time Rocky doesn't win. I'm coming through. I'm the real deal."

"I know he's got idiots around him who are blowing smoke up his ass. Over time he is believing all the bulls--t of his chums. He's not daft. Anybody who watches boxing knows I'm very dangerous for him."

"It makes sense in every single way you look at it. I want to be fighting in March and then, with or without Khan, I want to be involved in a huge fight in the summer. But if it is Khan, I will leave everything I have in that ring."

And he meant it.

AMIR KHAN

Khan had a harrowing experience of his own – visiting Peshawar, Pakistan – in the aftermath of the massacre at a school where 132 children were killed by terrorists in December. He told me that "the shiver" he felt will haunt him forever.

Khan, now 28 and a father himself, was raised in Bolton, England, but his family hails from Rawalpindi in Pakistan. He told me he saw "bullet holes and blood on the walls" during what he described as "the worst experience" of his life.

"I don't ever get scared or have fear even though I step into a ring and I fight for a living ... but the thought of what happened in those classrooms sent a shiver through me," he said.

"It's so sad. I just left me imagining how the kids were killed and how there would have been dead bodies all over the floor. It gave me a bit of a wake-up call, to be honest. These are children who didn't do anything to anyone. They were innocent."

Khan said he planned to auction and donate the proceeds from the gold and diamond-encrusted shorts he wore against Devon Alexander to help rebuild the school.

ANTHONY CROLLA

I also spoke with Crolla, who was hit over the head with a concrete slab that fractured his skull as he tried to apprehend thieves who had burglarized a neighbor's home.

"I've got stitches where the fractured skull is, I've got a nice scar down my forehead. I've also got a plate and screws in my ankle, which is broken in two places," said the likeable lad from Manchester.

The burglars also stole Crolla's world-title shot against WBA lightweight titleholder Richar Abril. It had been scheduled for Jan. 23.

"Some people say it was a brave thing I did – and I don't want to sound cheesy – it wasn't brave," he said. "It was just instinct. I would do it again. That's my natural instinct."

The world-title fight and the payday have come and gone. But the story went far and wide. The villains were caught.

Liverpool's Derry Matthews is now scheduled to fight Abril on March 6. If Derry wins, it would set up a third fight with rival Crolla. Matthews won their first encounter and they drew in the rematch.

A third fight could sell out a major Manchester venue. Given his heroic status, there will certainly be a few more thousand seats sold when Crolla fights next.

"The plan is to get out in the summer," said Crolla, 28. "My support has been growing and growing over the years, but, obviously, the support I've received off the back of this will help a lot.

"People want to see me lift that world title. If even half of them come, I think it will be sold out."

U.K. TOP 10

1. CARL FROCH
2. AMIR KHAN
3. KELL BROOK
4. CARL FRAMPTON
5. JAMES DEGALE
6. TYSON FURY
7. SCOTT QUIGG
8. GEORGE GROVES
9. JAMIE MCDONNELL
10. PAUL BUTLER

11-15: Martin Murray, Billy Joe Saunders, Tony Bellew, Kid Galahad, Callum Smith.
(Through fights of Feb. 8, 2015)

Tyson Fury is prepared to fight either Wladimir Klitschko or Deontay Wilder.

ACTOR JAMES COSMO

You might not know Cosmo's name immediately but you'll know his face from movies such as "Braveheart" and "Game of Thrones." He's familiar as the big man who plays veteran warriors in historical dramas and epics.

Cosmo has put his name, face and brooding presence to a formidable film involving familiar themes from boxing. "The Pyramid Texts," written by Geoff Thompson, heralds a riveting performance from Cosmo.

"It's a 90-minute poem," said Thompson, a world karate champion, after a private industry screening of the film.

In absolute stillness, in the sweat and spit of a renowned gym, Cosmo transports us to a place where we have to consider life and fear, as well as the relationships with those who give us life and teach us about fear. Our parents, our teachers, our trainers. Sometimes they are one and the same.

Cosmo told me: "It's wonderful to see people's reactions to it and see that it touched so many people. As actors, we draw things from inside ourselves and that's where the reality comes from. When it's externalized, it doesn't work. When it comes from inside, it really works. It was the toughest job I ever did, but one of the most rewarding as well."

Barry McGuigan, the former world champion, was at the private screening and thought it was "brilliant."

"It conjures up sad memories for me because my brother committed suicide," he said. "But if you want authenticity and gravitas, this was outstanding. Boxing is a violent and incredibly risky and dangerous business yet the most fulfilling and exhilarating sport in the world. That's what draws us to it. It's just different. It's the greatest sport in the world and the greatest form of entertainment. He nailed so much of it there."

The film is due to appear in festivals this year. And a play, with Cosmo, will open in Birmingham and then might be staged in London's West End theater district.

TYSON FURY

Frank Warren is convinced Tyson Fury will step into a world title challenge in 2015, with a couple of routes open to the 6-foot-9, unbeaten heavyweight contender. Namely Wlad Klitschko or Deontay Wilder. Bring it on, is the message.

"We're after the Wladimir Klitschko fight because Tyson's the mandatory challenger (to the WBO title). Providing he doesn't lose to Christian Hammer, he'll be the mandatory," Warren said as this issue of THE RING was going to press. "As for Wilder, he's the one who has been talking up that fight. We don't have a problem with that fight."

Like Fury, though, Warren believes Klitschko is playing games. "I think Wladimir is trying to avoid Tyson, I really do," he said. "He's fought tall guys before but [Tyson is] somebody who is actually young and somebody who has got actual desire and isn't just showing up on the night to lose."

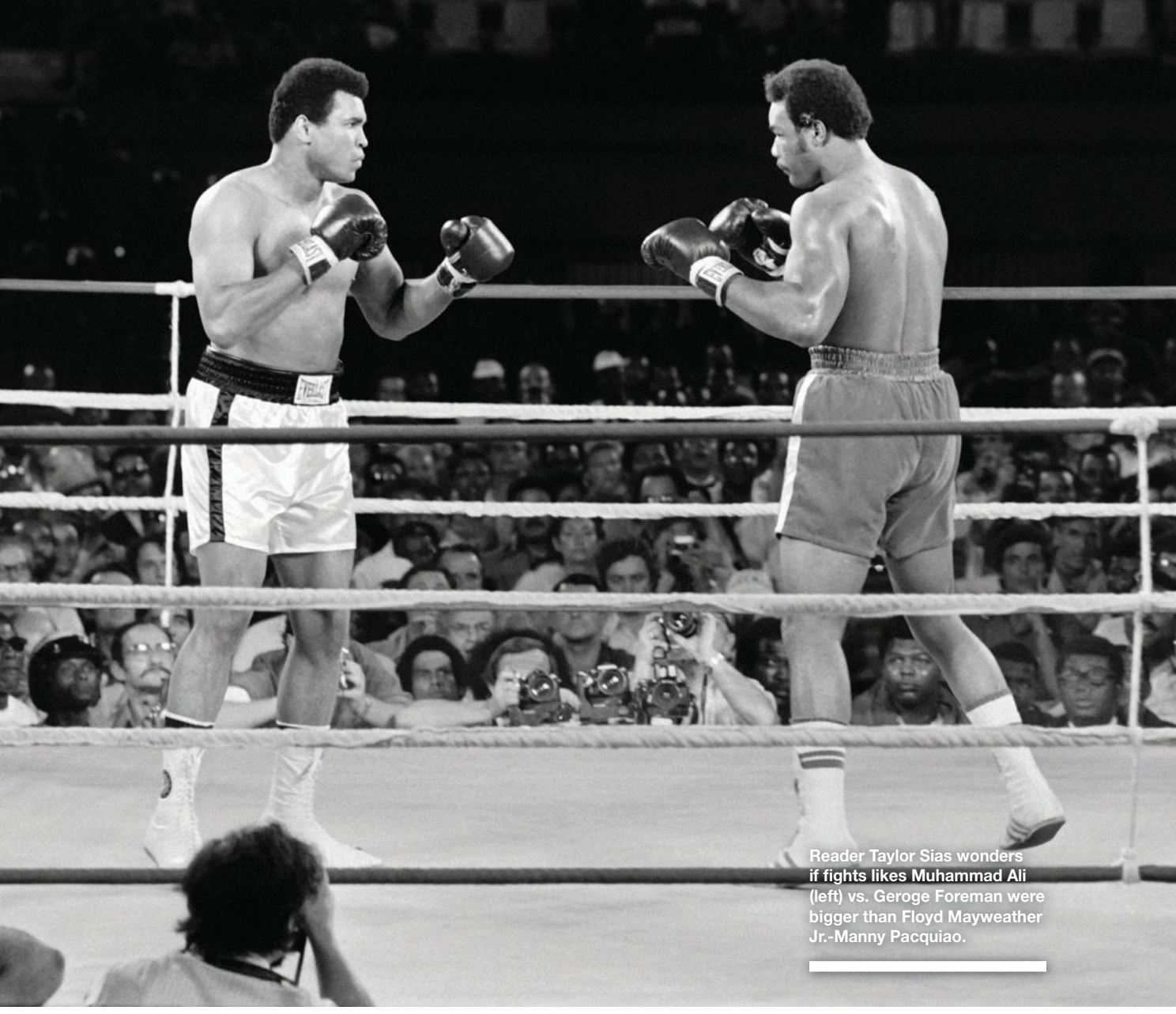
Warren was impressed by Fury in his demolition of Dereck Chisora late last year. From ringside, Fury certainly had fun busting up the Londoner.

"This year we want the best to fight the best but just get on with it," Warren said. "This year is all about the fans getting a single, defining heavyweight champion. Vitali Klitschko retired and that was great because it pushed us closer to having a linear champion in Wladimir. We've also got these new, young kids on the block ready to take over.

"We've got Wilder and Fury, who are leading the pack now and are good enough to cause an upset. So let's make it happen," added Warren, who told me he would look to Arsenal Stadium or Wembley if either of those fights came to the U.K.

Gareth A Davies is boxing correspondent for The Telegraph, London.

BRYN LENNON/GETTY IMAGES



Reader Taylor Sias wonders if fights likes Muhammad Ali (left) vs. Geroge Foreman were bigger than Floyd Mayweather Jr.-Manny Pacquiao.

XAUME OLLEROS/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

BEST OF DOUGIE'S MAILBAG

EXCERPTS FROM THE **RINGTV.COM** EDITOR'S POPULAR COLUMN

By **Doug Fischer**

Since 2001, RingTV.com Editor Doug Fischer has held an ongoing dialog – which occasionally becomes heated debate – with boxing fans from around the world in "Dougie's Mailbag."

The following excerpts are from the Feb. 23, 2015, edition of Fischer's online column.

TAYLOR SIAS, FROM JUPITER, FLORIDA, told Fischer that he's skeptical of claims that the Floyd Mayweather Jr.-Manny Pacquiao superfight is the biggest boxing event in the history of the sport. "Financially, that is true," wrote Sias, "but weren't Muhammad Ali-Joe Frazier, Ali-George Foreman, Sugar Ray Leonard-Marvin Hagler and even just recently Oscar De La Hoya-Mayweather perhaps even bigger? I think that claim is hyperbole."

DOUGIE'S REPLY: We'll find out after May 2 if it's hyperbole. In terms of money paid out and revenue generated, Mayweather-Pacquiao will be a record-breaker. There's little doubt about that. But that doesn't mean it's the "biggest" fight in history. How much it transcends the boxing and sports worlds and seeps into the mainstream media and the lives of everyday people over the next nine weeks will let us know how "big" this matchup truly is. It's a given that it will be pushed hard on CBS, Showtime and HBO. How much will we see and hear about it on other

networks and media? It's a given that all boxing websites (and the boxing pages of ESPN.com, Yahoo! Sports, etc.) will comprehensively cover the fight and its buildup but what about general news and entertainment media? The megafights of the past did more than grab the cover of Sports Illustrated; they made the cover of Time magazine and were talked about on the prime-time national newscasts of all the major networks. I think Mayweather-Pacquiao is the biggest fight in terms of crossover media/public attention since Lennox Lewis-Mike Tyson (2002) and the most significant boxing matchup since Sugar Ray Leonard-Thomas Hearns I (1981). And that's saying something.

GREG, FROM NOTTINGHAM, ENGLAND, wanted Fischer's thoughts on what fights fans might expect on the Mayweather-Pacquiao undercard? He also asked if Fischer could pick any two fights to go on the undercard to support the massive event, which two would he pick? Greg said it would be a dream for some of the top flyweight and junior bantamweight fighters to get some exposure.

DOUGIE'S REPLY: I don't expect high-quality bouts on the Mayweather-Pacquiao undercard for two reasons: 1. The money it took to make the main event exceeds the gross national product of some third-world countries. 2. The promoters don't have to. Only the hardest of hardcore fans care about the undercard bouts. Everyone else will be in a frenzied tizzy over the main event. So I'm expecting Mickey Bey-Miguel Vazquez II and Jessie Vargas-Khabib Allakhverdiev II to be the two supporting pay-per-view bouts for Mayweather-Pacquiao. If I could pick any two fights to go on the PPV undercard, I'd go with the Roman Gonzalez-Juan Francisco Estrada rematch and Vasyl Lomachenko-Nicholas Walters. I know both fights will be totally ignored by the masses (just as the gems on some of Mike Tyson's PPV undercards – such as Simon Brown-Maurice Blocker and Azumah Nelson-Jeff Fenech I – were in the early 1990s) but that's OK. Boxing fanatics like us can have a big ole nerdgasm as the little guys upstage the main event.

THE SAVAGE ONE, FROM LONDON, says he fears for Fischer's sanity in the event that Mayweather beats Pacquiao due to the social media and comment-section abuse he's bound to get from Mayweather's fans. "So we all better hope Pac spanks him or you'll have to write your mailbags from a mental institution," he wrote. "I wouldn't wanna be you."

DOUGIE'S REPLY: I'm gonna have to hear from obnoxious fanboys regardless of who wins on May 2. If I pick Mayweather to win, which I'm leaning toward, I'll have to hear it from Pacquiao's legion of faithful fools (who are still miffed that I picked Tim Bradley to win the rematch last year). If I pick Pacquiao, obviously, I'll have to hear it from The Money Team Morons, who will demand that I write and post a heartfelt apology in THE RING Magazine and on RingTV.com and all its social media platforms. (I'm not joking. I would fully expect that reaction, as many of those dweebs demanded such after Mayweather beat Canelo in 2013.)

Even if I pick correctly, some of these pinheads will still be mad at me just for giving the other guy a chance in my pre-fight analysis. But I won't be the only boxing person they put into the nuthouse. The fans of whoever wins will make everyone who reads about boxing on the internet sick with their endless celebration of "I Told You So's" and the fans of whoever loses will drive everyone crazy with their sour grapes.

CRAIG BREWER, FROM SINGAPORE, believes that Mayweather's typical slow starts give Pacquiao a chance to take an early lead that he can carry to the end of the fight. "I fully expect Pacquiao to come out guns blazing in the first 15 minutes (think Pacquiao-Marquez IV-type ferocity) and land as many hard shots as he can, to Mayweather's body in particular," wrote Brewer. "If he can drop Money once or twice and put some real hurt on his body, I do not see Mayweather running away with the last seven rounds. Pacquiao can simply use his faster feet and high punch-volume to get the win by taking two of the last seven rounds, which is well within the realm of possibility. I know I'm going against the bookmakers. However, I truly believe Pacquiao can get it done."

DOUGIE'S REPLY: You're going against the bookmakers right now, Craig. I don't know if that will be the case by fight time. Mayweather opened as a 3-to-1 favorite. Those odds are already down to 2-to-1, so clearly Pacquiao has the support of his fans (who will probably get the odds down to even-money by fight time) but also neutral folks who share your belief.

I'm not a betting man but I agree that this is a fight that Pacquiao can win. And I don't think he needs to score a knockdown or come out guns blazing to ensure the victory, either. I just think he has to establish his jab first (which he can do against Floyd, being a southpaw), be the busier boxer and give the undefeated American angles when he's in range. I think if Pacquiao tries too hard to hurt Mayweather, there's a greater risk of falling into the hometown favorite's traps. I want to see if Manny can throw Floyd off with his feints and footwork. If he can, I think he just needs to swarm Mayweather a couple of times each round as the undefeated boxer goes into defense mode or backs to the ropes in order to gain the edge on the scorecards. Of course, Mayweather could simply refuse to back up and look to be the one to land the hurtful punches early in the fight. That wouldn't entirely surprise me. Those early rounds will be very interesting if Mayweather decides to draw a line in the sand.

Melissa McMorrow has held her own against elite opponents, including Nadia Raoui (next page).

MARTIN ROSE/BONGARTS/GETTY IMAGES

SMALL WONDER

MELISSA MCMORROW CONTINUES TO BATTLE IN SPITE OF OBSTACLES BECAUSE SHE LOVES THE SPORT

By **Thomas Gerbasi**

Melissa McMorrow might be the best 9-5 fighter in the world today.

Among male fighters, that kind of slate would relegate a competitor to the B-side and prelim bouts forever. In McMorrow's case, however, the so-so record reflects a career of facing one elite opponent after another. And several of those losses might've been wins if fought on a level playing field.

In other words, numbers don't always tell the full story.

Last year saw the 33-year-old from San Francisco take time off from her day job as an architect at SolarCity Corporation to travel to Mexico twice and compete against two of that country's best: Mariana Juarez and THE RING's 2013 Fighter of the Year, Jessica Chavez. McMorrow returned home with two losses on the scorecards but few who watched the fight agreed with those verdicts, including McMorrow.

"I just don't really see how they saw it ending up in the other person's favor," McMorrow said, chalking it up to either politics or an "unconscious bias."

There is resignation in her voice as she discusses these most recent setbacks, not surprising since she's been there before. There isn't much talk about her nine wins but she can cite chapter and verse about those five losses. Resignation doesn't mean bitterness, though.

"If women's boxing does get to the point where people are making money, then I feel like it might be a different situation," she said. "I might be angrier because there's more on the line. Right now, even if I win, my purse with the title might go up what, two grand, maybe five?"

She laughs, evidence of her healthy outlook on bad decisions. Maybe it's because she has a career outside the ring to fall back on or because her career in the ring is still one to be proud of. She won a world title in 2012, handing highly-regarded Susi Kentikian her first pro defeat – in Kentikian's homeland of Germany, no less – and she successfully defended her WBO flyweight title twice before being stripped of the belt for inactivity early last year. She's also gained a well-deserved reputation as a tireless worker, which is imperative because she's only 4 feet 11 inches tall. She must work very hard to land punches.

"I have to be in that kind of shape because I can't just stick my arm out and hit you," she said. "I could do the stick-and-move stuff against someone that's shorter than me but those people just don't exist."

Plenty of intriguing matchups are still there for McMorrow, though. And she wants them all, whether it's a rematch with WBC flyweight champion Arely Mucino, who scored a – surprise! – controversial split-decision win over the Californian in 2012, or what would be considered a 112-pound superfight with Ava Knight, who is No. 6 on THE RING pound-for-pound list. McMorrow is even willing to go back across the border to get the fights she wants.

"I know that I fought a lot in Mexico and I always lose but there are still fights I want to take there," she said. "I know that sounds crazy but, the thing is, most of the people between 108 and 115 pounds are in Mexico and I can't find the backing here to put on fights the caliber I want to fight in. I don't even get offered fights here anymore because people don't want to lose. The fights in Mexico are the only ones I really get offered … and I'm not done fighting, so I don't want to sit around."

Few would want to go back to a place that has wronged them once, let alone two or three times, but McMorrow isn't typical in any sense of the word. She wants to do battle with the best in the game and win another title. It's just what she does.

"I have a great time fighting, I love fighting, and I spend a lot of time training and I train really hard," she said. "And it's because I want to. I think it's fun and it's rewarding."

Those rewards will have nothing to do with money. While she's confident that things are looking up for the sport thanks to the recent WBC women's convention and the upcoming 2016 Olympics, she doesn't expect to earn any lucrative paydays.

"In my lifetime as a fighter I don't think I'll see any monetary reward or anything much more major," she said without a trace of bitterness. "I get bored really easily and this makes other parts of my life a lot better." RING

WOMEN'S POUND FOR POUND

1. CECILIA BRAEKHUS
Norway • 27-0 (7 KOs)
Welterweight

2. JELENA MRDJENOVICH
Canada • 34-9-1 (18 KOS)
Featherweight

3. DELFINE PERSOON
Belgium • 31-1 (14 KOs)
Lightweight

4. DIANA PRAZAK
Australia • 13-3 (9 KOs)
Junior lightweight

5. JESSICA CHAVEZ
Mexico • 21-4-3 (4 KOs)
Junior flyweight

6. AVA KNIGHT
U.S. • 13-2-3 (5 KOs)
Flyweight

7. JACKIE NAVA
Mexico • 31-4-3 (13 KOs)
Junior featherweight

8. IBETH ZAMORA SILVA
Mexico • 21-5 (8 KOs)
Junior flyweight

9. LAYLA MCCARTER
U.S. • 36-13-5 (8 KOs)
Lightweight

10. ERICA ANABELLA FARIAS
Argentina • 21-1 (10 KOs)
Junior welterweight

Through fights of Feb. 8, 2015

Corona Extra

BOXING

ACHIEVING GREATNESS *takes* SOMETHING EXTRA.

PROUD SPONSOR OF GOLDEN BOY

Imported by Crown Imports LLC. Chicago, IL 60603. Relax responsibly.

RINGSIDE REPORTS

WORLDWIDE RESULTS— Go to: bit.ly/worldwide-results or scan the QR code to see weekly fight results at RingTV.com.

BY NORM FRAUENHEIM

Brandon Rios' dominating victory over Mike Alvarado (left) put him back in the thick of the welterwight picture.

BRANDON RIOS TKO 3 MIKE ALVARADO

Date: Jan. 24
Site: 1stBank Center, Broomfield, Colo.
Division: Welterweight
Weights: Rios 146.75 pounds, Alvarado 146.5
RING rating (going into fight): Rios not rated, Alvarado No. 5 at junior welterweight
Network: HBO

Third time's the charm? Not this time. The third leg in the Brandon Rios-Mike Alvarado trilogy fizzled. More dud than drama. But don't blame Rios, who understood that the stakes were enormous. Blame Alvarado, who didn't get the message until after a motivated Rios sent his career tumbling into disrepair.

The second sequel looked more like a Rios tune-up than a defining moment in a rivalry that had generated impossible expectations. It reminded no one of Gatti-Ward or even of Rios-Alvarado I and II.

But it put Rios (33-2-1, 24 knockouts) back in the money mix. The unprepared and perhaps distracted Alvarado (34-4, 23 KOs) denied Rios a real chance to prove he is all the way back from a one-sided loss to Manny Pacquiao and a messy victory over a disqualified Diego Chaves.

We'll have to wait and see on that one, maybe against Timothy Bradley or Juan Manuel Marquez. Even Victor Ortiz has been mentioned. Ortiz-Rios might not have much impact at the top of the welterweight division, but it would be an irresistible confrontation between emotional personalities who have been feuding since they were kids in Kansas.

Not long after the third round when Alvarado surrendered, Ortiz fired the first rhetorical shot.

"Always my punching bag," Ortiz said in a tweet. "Where's the contract?"

Rios countered almost as quickly as he threw uppercuts at Alvarado.

"I used to make you cry in sparring," he said in a Twitter conflict that promises to escalate.

Rios, re-energized and as unapologetic as ever, wasn't finished.

"I'll make you quit, make you quit at the press conference," he said in a follow-up tweet.

It sounds as if the hostility could at some point lead to an opening bell, if not a brawl at the weigh-in. These two guys don't like each other. What more can a promoter ask for? What's more, there's plenty to like about Rios, who is as unpredictable as he is profane. He gets people talking. That means good television ratings. According to Nielsen, 1.315 million watched the HBO telecast of Rios-Alvarado III.

It's safe to say that most won't watch Alvarado again. But they probably won't have to. At 34, it's not clear what happens to him, especially since he was arrested for an outstanding felony warrant and possession of a handgun a few weeks before the bout. Only a fight in court awaits Alvarado.

"I wasn't as prepared as I should have been and this is what I get," said Alvarado, who was knocked down in the third.

Top Rank promoter Bob Arum summed it up when he said Alvarado had nothing, perhaps because of the arrest or tough fights against Rios, Ruslan Provodnikov and Marquez or advancing age – or all of the above.

But Arum could still smile. Rios showed he might have a lot left. One thing is certain: He'll get another opportunity. That's a winner, even if the trilogy wasn't.

TUREANO JOHNSON TKO 5 ALEX THERAN

Jan. 9, Madison Square Garden, New York (Fox Sports 1)

★ A promotional entity made its debut and a middleweight introduced himself as a potential contender on a stage as big as any.

The curtain at Madison Square Garden's Theater went up on Jay Z's Roc Nation with celebrities at ringside watching Tureano Johnson audition for a chance at stardom.

"I'm ready to fight Gennady Golovkin, Miguel Cotto or any other champion," said Johnson (18-1, 13 KOs) after his stoppage win over Alex Theran (17-2, 10 KOs).

Despite the setting, however, Johnson's victory was no knockout. Theran was unable to continue after the fifth because of an ankle sprain.

Still, Johnson was impressive, scoring a knockdown in the fourth and again in the fifth.

"I wish I could have showed the crowd what I can really do," said Johnson, who put himself in line to get that wish fulfilled.

WILLIE MONROE JR. UD 10 BRYAN VERA

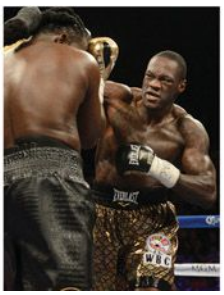
Jan. 15, Verona, N.Y. (ESPN2)

★ There's boxing in Willie Monroe Jr.'s DNA. His father fought. His great uncle, Willie "The Worm" Monroe, beat Marvin Hagler. But there was a time, 17 months long, when there was no opening bell in his life.

After his career stalled following a loss in 2011, there were only odd jobs for Monroe, including part-time work at Foot Locker. His kids had to eat. But just like his dad he had to fight and he has, re-exerting his identity and recapturing momentum with a 99-90, 98-91, 97-92 decision over middleweight Bryan Vera. It's Monroe's ninth straight victory since the only blemish on his record.

"Everybody's road to the top is different," said Monroe (19-1, 6 KOs), who scored a flash knockdown in the fifth and landed lefts throughout the 10 rounds against the well-traveled Vera (23-9, 14 KOs).

If he gets there, that road will look a lot like the other lines on the Monroe family map.



NO. 6 DEONTAY WILDER UD 12 NO. 2 BERMANE STIVERNE

Jan. 17, MGM Grand, Las Vegas (Showtime)

★ Skepticism has been attached to Deontay Wilder ever since he became America's only medalist at the 2008 Olympics in Beijing. It's still there, persistent and yet a reliable resource.

Doubt is loaded with power and Wilder, America's first heavyweight with a major title since Shannon Briggs, has used it in a career full of surprises. A late-bloomer's story continued to unfold against Bermane Stiverne with a 119-108, 120-107, 118-109 decision that was significant because it was the first time Wilder had gone beyond four rounds. It was a dimension nobody had seen or expected against a dehydrated Stiverne (24-2-1, 21 KOs).

Had he kept his KO ratio perfect, it would have been the same old Wilder with the same old questions about his chances against Wladimir Klitschko or Tyson Fury. But his first decision in 33 victories has made the doubters think again.

NO. 2 LEO SANTA CRUZ TKO 8 JESUS RUIZ

Jan. 17, MGM Grand, Las Vegas (Showtime)

★ Within the ropes, Leo Santa Cruz has faced few challenges. That's the problem. It has created impatience among fans bored by victories over unknowns and exasperated with an unfulfilled promise to fight Guillermo Rigondeaux.

It was exasperation shared by his ex-promoter, Oscar De La Hoya, who abruptly sold his contract to Al Haymon after Santa Cruz (29-0-1, 17 KOs) balked at a 122-pound showdown with Rigondeaux following a ho-hum eighth-round stoppage of Jesus Ruiz (33-6-5, 22 KOs), who had as much of a chance as Santa Cruz's prior victim, Manuel Roman.

The move was no surprise, perhaps. Santa Cruz's newborn son is named Al and not Oscar. In naming his child after Haymon, Santa Cruz declared that his future is with his powerful adviser, whose many clients include Abner Mares – no Rigondeaux but a likely Santa Cruz foe.

AMIR IMAM TKO 5 FIDEL MALDONADO JR.

Jan. 17, MGM Grand, Las Vegas (Showtime)

★ Don King could be an early contender for 2015 Comeback of the Year honors with a vintage performance at a news conference for the Deontay Wilder-Bermane Stiverne card. The old lion's voice was loud and inexhaustible. In junior welterweight Amir Imam, King has reason to roar.

Imam (16-0, 14 KOs) stole the show, knocking down Fidel Maldonado Jr. (19-3, 16 KOs) four times and getting up from one in the third for a fifth-round stoppage.

The lanky Imam reminds some of Thomas Hearns. Dynamic leverage in his power floored Maldonado in the second and twice in a wild third before a left hook put the New Mexico 140-pounder on the canvas for the last time at 2:59 of the fifth.

"By the end of the year, I plan on being the champ," said Imam.

NO. 7 GILBERTO RAMIREZ UD 10 MAXIM VLASOV

Jan. 24, Broomfield, Colo. (HBO)

★ Mexico is always searching for the next fighter to carry on a heritage personified by Julio Cesar Chavez Sr. It's a burden and an honor. These days, it belongs to Gilberto Ramirez. He's the designated successor, Mexico's crown price.

At 23, the left-handed super middleweight is young but has a record (31-0, 24 KOs) full of potential. Being next, however, comes with heavy expectations.

More was expected from Ramirez against Maxim Vsalov (30-2, 15 KOs). Ramirez won, scoring a 97-93, 96-94, 97-93 decision, but he didn't dominate. There were moments when the Russian battled him to standstill in a bout fought at close range.

"Toughest opponent I've fought," said Ramirez, who suffered a bruise beneath his left eye.

The good news: Ramirez was back in the gym 16 days after the fight. Mistakes must be corrected, said a crown prince who is still a student.

ROBINSON CASTELLANOS UD 12 ROCKY JUAREZ

Jan. 26, San Antonio (Fox Sports 1)

★ Rocky Juarez's star-crossed career includes Olympic silver that some say should have been gold. It includes a split-decision loss to Marco Antonio Barrera that was announced as a draw, yet changed after it was discovered that the scorecard totals were wrong.

But against a guy nicknamed "Robin Hood" nobody could say he got robbed.

Robinson Castellanos (21-10, 13 KOs) left Juarez (30-11-1, 21 KOs) with only retirement as an option. Castellanos, a potential challenger to Jhonny Gonzalez's featherweight title, won easily. He knocked down Juarez four times, three times in the 12th.

Despite the 118-106, 118-107, 118-106 scorecards, however, Juarez battled Castellanos with a dynamic mix of passion and desperation. His left hook cut Castellanos above the right eye and left him with a badly swollen right cheekbone. If this was indeed Juarez's final fight, he wasn't going to go away without leaving a mark.

KEVIN MITCHELL TKO 8 NO. 8 DANIEL ESTRADA

Jan. 31, 02 Arena, London (Sky Sports 1)

★ Kevin Mitchell's biggest fight is ongoing. Booze is a stubborn temptation. It'll always be a challenge. But an eighth-round stoppage of Daniel Estrada was a sign that Mitchell is winning that battle.

Questions about Mitchell have been rooted in an erratic lifestyle. He spent more time at the bar than the gym. He told the U.K.'s Daily Mail that he blew 100,000 pounds, or about $154,000, on booze. It left a colossal hangover and no chance at beating Ricky Burns in a world-title shot in 2012.

Against Estrada in a lightweight eliminator, Mitchell (39-2, 29 KOs), sober and sensational, put himself in line for another shot against Jorge Linares. Mitchell 's uppercuts rocked Estrada (32-4-1, 24 KOs), flooring the Mexican in the second round of a bout mercifully stopped at 1:12 of the eighth.

NO. 4 WANHENG MENAYOTHIN UD 12 JEFFREY GALERO

Feb. 5, Nakhon Sawan, Thailand (Channel 7/ Thailand)

★ He's never fought outside of Thailand. That makes Wanheng Menayothin a secret. But a perfect record can be a hard secret to keep, especially one that's 37 fights long.

Menayothin won No. 37 in the first defense of his 105-pound world title with a 119-109, 120-108, 120-109 decision over Jeffrey Galero (11-1, 5 KOs), a Filipino who could not keep the Thai off him in a patient, punishing assault.

Menayothin, who was coming off one of his 12 KOs in a stoppage of Oswaldo Novoa in November, got most of the points. Galero got all the bruises.

How Menayothin would fare outside Thailand is an open-ended question. It's not even known if he'd be willing to travel. But his record is bound to attract interest in Japan or South Africa. He has more victories than anybody ranked among THE RING's Top 10.

SERGIO MORA SD 12 ABRAHAM HAN

Feb. 6, Biloxi, Miss. (ESPN2)

★ A late sub is like an unforeseen pothole. It's a mishap waiting to happen. Sergio Mora avoided the accident, eluding upset with a split decision over Abraham Han.

Han took the middleweight bout on two weeks' notice. Mora had trained for Jermain Taylor in a bid for Taylor's belt but a felony arrest in late January took Taylor and the title off the card.

Instead, there was uncertainty, an advantage exploited by Han (23-2, 14 KOs), who repeatedly switched from an orthodox stance to southpaw.

"Late replacement, you never know," said Mora (28-3-2, 9 KOs), who kept himself in line for the winner of a possible David Lemieux-Hassan N'Dam fight for the belt stripped from Taylor.

The fight was closer than expected. But Mora's punches were more accurate, scoring enough to survive a 10th-round knockdown for 114-113, 115-112 edge on two cards. The third favored the aggressive Han 115-112.

JOHNSON: RICH SCHULTZ/GETTY IMAGES FOR ROC NATION SPORTS; WIDER/SANTA CRUZ/IMAM; NAOKIFUKUDA; RAMIREZ: JUSTIN EDMONDS/GETTY IMAGES;CASTELLANOS: EDWARD A. ORNELAS /SAN ANTONIO EXPRESS-NEWS; MITCHELL: DEAN MOUHTAROPOULOS/GETTY IMAGES;MENAYOTHIN: COURTESY OF THAIREC.COM; MORA: TIM ISBELL/SUN HERALD

COMING UP

PREDICTIONS ARE MADE BY RING STAFF MEMBERS MICHAEL ROSENTHAL, DOUG FISCHER AND BRIAN HARTY

Bryant Jennings will have to buy another suitcase for his new belts if he beats Wladimir Klitschko.

MARCH

MARCH 21 – Juergen Braehmer vs. Robin Krasniqi, light heavyweights, Rostock, Germany
MARCH 21 – Denis Lebedev vs. Youri Kalenga, cruiserweights (for Lebedev's WBA title), Moscow
MARCH 26 – Breidis Prescott vs. Fredrick Lawson, welterweights, Hialeah, Fla. (ESPN2)
MARCH 28 – Kell Brook vs. Jo Jo Dan, welterweights (for Brook's IBF title), Sheffield, England (SkySports in U.K.)
MARCH 28 – Jhonny Gonzalez vs. Gary Russell Jr., featherweights (for Gonzalez's WBC title), U.S. (Showtime)
MARCH 28 – Jermell Charlo vs. Vanes Martirosyan, junior middleweights, U.S. (Showtime)
MARCH 28 – Donnie Nietes vs. Luis Ceja, junior flyweights (for Nietes' RING and WBO junior flyweight titles), Pasay City, Philippines
MARCH 28 – Nonito Donaire vs. William Prado, junior featherweights, Pasay City, Philippines
MARCH 28 – Carlos Cuadras vs. Luis Concepcion, junior bantamweights (for Cuadras' WBC title), Mexico

APRIL

DANNY GARCIA VS. LAMONT PETERSON

Date: April 11
Location: Barclays Center, Brooklyn, N.Y.
Division: 143-pound catch weight (no titles at stake)
TV: NBC
Watchability rating (up to five stars): ★★★★★

Also fighting: Andy Lee vs. Peter Quillin, middleweights (for Lee's WBO title); Danny Jacobs vs. Caleb Truax, middleweights
Significance: Garcia (29-0, 17 KOs) will be taking part in his first truly big fight since he beat Lucas Matthysse in September 2013. Peterson (33-2-1, 17 KOs) is 2-0 since he was stopped by Matthysse in May 2013. This is the second show in the NBC boxing series.
Prediction: Rosenthal – Garcia KO 10; Fischer – Garcia UD; Harty – Garcia UD

WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO VS. BRYANT JENNINGS

Date: April 25
Location: Madison Square Garden, New York City
Division: Heavyweight (for Klitschko's RING, IBF, WBA and WBO titles)
TV: HBO
Watchability rating (up to five stars): ★★★★
Significance: Klitschko (63-3, 53 KOs) will be fighting in the U.S. for the first time since he outpointed Sultan Ibragimov in 2008 at the Garden. Jennings (19-0, 10 KOs) might be in over his head. The Philadelphian struggled to outpoint Mike Perez last July and is clearly still developing.
Prediction: Rosenthal – Klitschko KO 7; Fischer – Klitschko KO 9; Harty – Klitschko KO 4

APRIL 4 – Adonis Stevenson vs. Sakio Bika, light heavyweights (for Stevenson's RING and WBC titles), Quebec City (CBS)
APRIL 4 – Kevin Bizier vs. Carlos Molina, welterweights, Quebec City (CBS)
APRIL 4 – Artur Beterbiev vs. Gabriel Campillo, light heavyweights, Quebec City (CBS)
APRIL 4 – Dave Ryan vs. Bradley Saunders, junior welterweights, Newcastle, England
APRIL 11 – Orlando Salido vs. Roman Martinez, junior lightweights (for Salido's WBO title), San Juan, Puerto Rico
APRIL 11 – Josh Warrington vs. Dennis Tubieron, featherweights, Leeds, England
APRIL 16 – Shinsuke Yamanaka vs. Diego Santillan, bantamweights (for Yamanaka's WBC title), Osaka, Japan.
APRIL 18 – Julio Cesar Chavez Jr. vs. Andrzej Fonfara, light heavyweights, U.S. (Showtime)
APRIL 18 – Richar Abril vs. Derry Mathews, lightweights (for Abril's WBA title), Liverpool, England
APRIL 25 – Javier Mendoza vs. Milan Melindo, junior flyweights (for Mendoza's IBF title), Tijuana, Mexico

MAY

MAY 2 – Floyd Mayweather Jr. vs. Manny Pacquiao, welterweights (for Mayweather's RING, WBA and WBC and Pacquiao's WBO titles), Las Vegas (PPV)
MAY 9 – Canelo Alvarez vs. James Kirkland, junior middleweights, Houston (HBO)

MIKE STOBE/GETTY IMAGES

ICELINKWATCH.COM

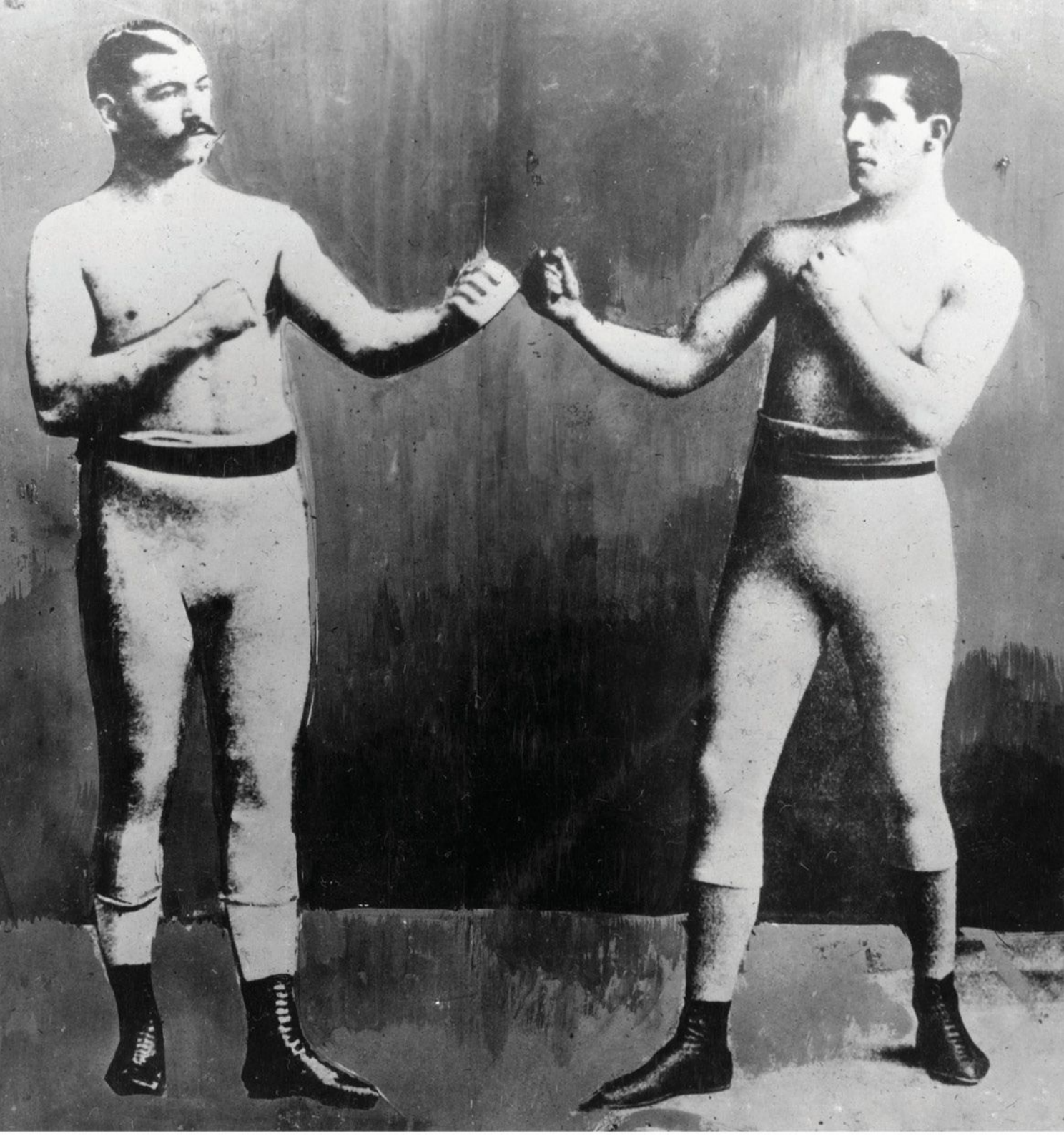
IceLink

ZT1
Black PVD Titanium &
18K Rose Gold Crowns

World's First Rectangular Mechanical Movement
The Zermatt Collection

Zermatt, Switzerland is clearly "the top" when it comes to the mountain experience... and now the worldly winter capital lends its name to a 99-piece, limited-edition collection of watches designed to take time keeping to new heights. Combining the creative extravagance of Los Angeles with the sophistication of Swiss savoir-faire, the Zermatt features Caliber ILMM1, a rectangular mechanical movement that powers all five zones and rotating seconds simultaneously.

Available Worldwide:
For pricing and availability, email **info@icelinkwatch.com** or call **323-782-8666**



From The RING Archive

THE FIRST SUPERFIGHT

The first superfight arguably was the meeting between the first heavyweight champion of the gloved era, John L. Sullivan, and challenger James J. Corbett (right, in this composite illustration) on Sept. 7, 1892, at the Olympic Club in New Orleans. Sullivan, the fearsome "Boston Strong Boy," famously boasted that "I can lick any man in the house" and almost always did. He entered the showdown with Corbett with iconic stature and a zero in his loss column. He was also a shopworn 33, though. Corbett was a fresh 26 when he stepped into the ring. And he brought with him a new philosophy, one which emphasized skill and athleticism over the strength and brawn for which Sullivan was known. The result proved that times had changed. Corbett befuddled Sullivan with speed and skill before finally stopping the great man in the 21st round, making Corbett the second modern heavyweight champ and the father of a more refined approach to the sport. "Gentleman Jim" would lose his title five years later to Bob Fitzsimmons while Sullivan never fought again. They are both boxing legends.

IT TAKES SIXTY MINUTES TO COVER
THE WORLD OF SPORTS

60 MINUTES sports™

SHOWTIME®
BRACE YOURSELF

©2014 Showtime Networks Inc. All rights reserved. SHOWTIME and related marks are trademarks of Showtime Networks Inc., a CBS Company.

CONCERTS, SPORTS
& THEATER TICKETS
WWW BARRYS TICKETS .COM
(800) 348-8499
ALL MLB, NBA, NFL, NCAA, NASCAR, SUPER BOWL, FINAL FOUR,
ALL STAR GAME & ALL MAJOR SPORTING EVENTS
www.BarrysTickets.com
WWW BARRYS TICKETS .COM
Great Tickets! Great Service! Great Prices!
Call (800) 348-8499 or visit BarrysTickets.com for great deals
on concerts, sports and theater tickets, local & nationwide!